

## **Grant Thornton LLP and Choice Hotels International Form Alliance To Deliver Value-Added Tax Consulting Services to Franchisees**

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Grant Thornton LLP, a major accounting, tax and management consulting firm, and Choice Hotels International, worldwide franchisor of Comfort, Quality, Clarion, Econo Lodge, Sleep, Rodeway Inn and MainStay Suites brand hotels, have formed a strategic alliance to offer a full range of tax consulting services to the 3,200 Choice brand franchisees in the U.S.

Grant Thornton will offer assistance to Choice franchisees through its Five-Star Tax Minimization Services program, a package of services that is designed to create tax savings and tax refunds in areas including Federal taxes, state and local taxes, real and personal property taxes and others, according to John Michel, hospitality industry tax partner with Grant Thornton's Cincinnati office.

"Many hotel properties are overpaying taxes in areas such as sales tax on vending machine sales, under-depreciation of capital assets and over-payment of real estate taxes," said Michel. "As a leading service provider to the hospitality industry, we can help owners save money, capture tax refunds and implement programs designed to minimize taxes. Our tax products align very well with the needs of this market and there is an outstanding fit between Choice franchisees and Grant Thornton's tradition of service to entrepreneurial firms."

The agreement between Choice and Grant Thornton is believed to be the first such alliance between a public accounting firm and a leading franchisor of hotel properties, according to Daniel Rothfeld, senior vice president, e-commerce and emerging business opportunities at Choice.

"One of our primary objectives in pursuing and establishing strategic alliances is saving money for our franchisees," said Rothfeld. "Grant Thornton offers the expertise and experience we were looking for in a tax services provider. We are delighted to be partnering with them to benefit our franchisees."

### **About Grant Thornton**

Grant Thornton, with executive offices in Chicago, has \$326 million in revenues and is the U.S. member of \$1.7 billion Grant Thornton International. The firm has four principal lines of business: professional services for middle-market companies, not-for-profit organizations and government agencies; tax consulting; corporate finance and risk management; and financial advisory services for business owners and senior management. Grant Thornton's Web site address is <http://www.grantthornton.com/>.

### **About Choice Hotels**

Choice Hotels International is the world's second largest lodging franchisor, marketing more than 5,000 hotels open or under development in 41 countries under the Comfort, Quality, Clarion, Sleep, Econo Lodge, MainStay Suites and Rodeway Inn brand names. Choice was recently named the #1 lodging franchise chain in Entrepreneur Magazine's annual Franchise 500. For more information on Choice, visit the company's web site at <http://www.choicehotels.com/>.

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