editor's introduction

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This book is intended for use by students seeking a concise and accessible review of key concepts that they are likely to encounter during the course of their studies in hospitality management. It is, in essence, an *introductory* work of reference. This means that, unlike a specialist dictionary, the entries are fewer and longer, and assume little or no prior knowledge of the concepts discussed. Thus, the text is also of potential value to the general academic reader seeking some insight into various aspects of management processes, procedures and practices in what is one of the world's most important – and growing – service industries.

The problem for the editor of a book such as this is deciding which concepts are 'key' and therefore what to include and what to leave out. It is probable that some readers will feel that certain concepts are absent that should not be. Other readers will, perhaps, feel that some concepts have been included which might better have been omitted. Four criteria have been employed in guiding the concept selection process. *First*, and universally, consideration has been given to the general subject fields and topics that are found in the curricula of undergraduate hospitality management diplomas and degrees. This involved comparing curricula from a considerable number and variety of educational establishments across the globe via published information on these institution's websites – not a perfect method but one that at least captures both continuities and variations in emphasis within different curricula.

The *second* criterion employed in determining which entries to include is to focus upon certain types of 'practical knowledge' that, if not unique to the management of hospitality, then are undoubtedly core to the business. A competent hospitality manager requires multiple skill sets that include, but go beyond, 'general' management knowledge, and an effort has been made to reflect this in the text. The concepts included that go under this broad heading are as follows:

- Accommodation, lodging and facilities management
- Beverages and beverage management
- Design for hotels
- Food, beverage and restaurant management
- Food production and service systems
- Front office management
- Gastronomy and haute cuisine
- Hotels and security
- Housekeeping management
- The meal experience
- Meetings, incentives, conferences/conventions and events/exhibitions (MICE)
- Revenue management

The *third* criterion employed in concept selection is, in effect, a mirror of the second. There are general management disciplines and concepts that, through research, have a known application in the hospitality sector. Here, a general concept or theoretical approach when applied to a particular industry or sector produces its own sub-set of knowledge reflecting the circumstances of that industry or sector. These concepts include those in the following list:

- Consumer behaviour in hospitality
- Customer relationship management in hospitality
- The hospitality finance environment
- Human resource management in hospitality
- Income statements in hospitality finance
- Information technology in hospitality
- Marketing in hospitality
- Operations management in hospitality
- Organizational behaviour in hospitality
- Procurement in hospitality
- Service quality in hospitality
- Strategy and strategic management in hospitality

The *fourth* and final criterion employed in selecting the entries for this book is best described as a contextual one. The hospitality industry does not function in a vacuum, nor for that matter does hospitality education and research. In recent years the increasing complexity and variety of the industry has generated much debate – some of it quite heated – over the importance or otherwise of certain topics and their underlying concepts. Some of these topics and concepts have emerged as part of general societal concern over the role of business in general – for example ecological and sustainability issues. Others have been particular to the hospitality industry, for example growing debates about how 'hospitality', 'hospitality management' and the 'hospitality industry' are defined and/or circumscribed. For someone new to the hospitality industry, all of these concepts provide a necessary context for understanding the sector and, again, increasingly feature in the curricula of degree and diploma programmes. They include the following:

- Entrepreneurship in hospitality
- Franchising
- Hospitality and hospitality management
- Hospitality management education
- Hotels, hospitality and sustainability
- Hotels and the internet
- Industry structure and sectors in hospitality
- Innovation in hospitality
- Investing in hotels
- Service, service industries and the hospitality sector
- Women, gender and hospitality employment

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The application of the above criteria to classify the concepts included in this book is necessarily somewhat artificial but has the advantage of transparency. For ease of use, the entries in this volume as with other reference works are in *alphabetical order*. However, for the user who wishes to treat the book holistically, as an introduction to the field of hospitality management (as opposed to, or in addition to, 'dipping' into the text as need demands), then the concept classification listings above offer alternative reading structures. For example, for someone wishing to first understand contextual issues in hospitality management then the list of concepts included under this heading are an obvious starting point, which may be followed by a reading of either the concepts core to the business of hospitality or equally by a study of those concepts that entail the application of generic management concepts to the sector.

Readers may also wish to note other features of this book's organization. *First*, following the heading for each entry, there is a short list of cross references to other immediately related concepts included within the book. *Secondly*, in each of the entries, the early paragraphs immediately after this list of cross-references contain a definition or statement of scope of the topic being considered. *Thirdly*, following this definition or statement of scope, each contributor has been asked to give a state-of-the-art summary and overview of the concept, including comment on its current status, where relevant, in terms of both academic debate and industry application. Also where relevant, consideration is given to strengths, weaknesses and controversies attendant on the concept and its applications. *Fourthly*, at the end of each entry are two sections – 'Further Reading' and 'References'. The Further Reading section contains additional references that the book's users may find particularly useful in adding to their depth of understanding. The References section gathers together all those sources cited in the entry. To add to the utility of the text, all these references together with citations in the Further Reading sections throughout the book are gathered into a single bibliography at the end of the volume. *Finally* here, each entry ends with the name of its contributor. A complete list of contributors and their affiliations is to be found at the beginning of the book.

BEYOND THIS BOOK

Although this book is an individual contribution within a series examining key concepts in a variety of subjects and disciplines, it can usefully be read alongside the companion volume *Key Concepts in Tourist Studies* (Smith, MacLeod and Hart Robertson, 2010). Further, for the student seeking a wider perspective on many of the topics in the text, a valuable additional resource is *The Sage Handbook of Hospitality Management* (Brotherton and Wood, 2008). *Key Concepts in Hospitality Management* is intended as an introductory guide to the 'anatomy' of its subject, hospitality management. The book is emphatically not a substitute for further reading. The volume is also unique in taking the 'conceptual approach' that it does. Past and many present introductions to hospitality management, though usually worthy, tend to an overly descriptive approach of the sectoral structure of the industry, although some also incorporate more advanced conceptual, analytical

and, indeed, controversial topics (fair examples of the latter with an American bias include Barrows and Powers, 2008a, 2008b; for a somewhat more UK and international bias see Brotherton, 2000 and 2003 respectively).

For those who wish to discover more beyond this book or the references cited immediately above, an internet search will reveal other titles available. There are also, of course, a great many websites that merit frequent checking, including news and analysis sites, for example: *e hotelier* (http://ehotelier.com); *4 Hoteliers* (www.4hoteliers.com/index.php); *Hospitality Net*™ (www.hospitalitynet.org/index.html); *hotelmarketing.com* (www.hotelmarketing.com/); and *iworkinhotels.com* (www.iworkinhotels.com/). Also of use are industry and other organizational sites such as that of the *World Travel and Tourism Council* (see www.wttc.org) and the *World Economic Forum* (www.weforum.org/). Professional associations, for example the UK *Institute of Hospitality* (www.instituteofhospitality.org), also provide valuable resources, as do specialized consultancy companies such as *HVS International* (www.hvs.com).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The hospitality industry is both exciting and challenging to work in, and to study. At its heart is a creative tension between upholding values of tradition appreciated by guests and customers, and the desire and need to innovate. Working in the industry can be hard for all categories of employee – hours may be long and unsocial, it can be difficult to achieve so-called work–life balance, and there can be frequent exposure to stressful situations. At the same time, in the best-run hospitality organizations there is genuine variety and interest in work, the satisfaction to be derived from contributing to the comfort and happiness of others, and extensive opportunities for those who are committed to advance quickly to senior positions and the rewards associated with them. Successful hospitality managers require a range of technical knowledge and skills, a versatility that is rarely required in other industries, at least at the start of a management career. Responsibility can come quickly in many parts of the world – it is not entirely unusual in some cases to find people in their mid- to late twenties acquiring their first general managership.

This book hopes to capture some of the excitement, challenge and above all diversity of a fascinating industry. The majority of contributors to this volume either hold, or have held positions in the hospitality sector and have sought, in their entries to the book, to share their knowledge and experience, to stimulate curiosity and to encourage engagement with the hospitality industry's many facets.

REFERENCES

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