

# FOREWORD

Whenever I am in the Orlando area, I try to meet with Bob Ford. He is one of the best scholars of hospitality management. I find that spending an afternoon with Bob fills me with both energy and curiosity. He has an uncanny ability to identify areas of opportunity and to discuss common practices in the hospitality industry and how we can investigate ways to improve them. I value his insights and his ability to recognize the real issues that we need to resolve with service delivery systems, so much so that I have had him come to Houston to spend a day with our faculty.

Through this book, everyone can spend a day with Professor Robert Ford. Bob loves to spend time with hospitality executives, discussing what keeps them up at night. This discussion provides him with not only a real understanding of the industry but also anecdotes he uses to illustrate his text. The examples of best practices presented in this book make it an interesting read. This book is structured as a textbook, but any manager of a hospitality organization will find the time spent reading this book a good investment.

The research suggests that there truly are important differences between managing a service organization and managing a tangible goods producing organization. Yet, there are very few books on the management of services. This book is the only one I know of on the management of hospitality services. When I taught services management, my choice for a text was Bob's *Managing the Guest Experience in Hospitality*. I come from a marketing background. Bob often reminds me that marketers make promises and operators have to deliver those promises. This book explains how to deliver the promise.

This book has been completely updated from *Managing the Guest Experience in Hospitality* with new examples and the latest thought on service management. Although Disney provides great examples of how to deliver great service, the book has been expanded to include examples from a diverse set of hospitality organizations, including international organizations. This inclusion will make it interesting and relevant to students going into any area of the hospitality industry and to students from across the globe. Michael Sturman, the Kenneth and Marjorie Blanchard Professor of Human Resources at Cornell University, joins Bob Ford in this edition. One of Michael's additions is his knowledge of compensation and staffing in the hospitality industry. Michael's research articles have been featured in the top management journals. He is known for his ability to communicate the implications of this research to practitioners and is former editor of and a frequent contributor to the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*.

I am delighted that Bob and Mike have created *Managing Quality Service in Hospitality: How Organizations Achieve Excellence in the Guest Experience*, based on *Managing the Guest Experience*. I am delighted not only for myself, but also for my guests, the students of hospitality management. I strongly recommend *Managing Quality Service in Hospitality* as a must read for hospitality managers and a text for hospitality management programs.

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# PREFACE

Welcome to *Managing Quality Service in Hospitality*. While this book may look familiar to those who have read *Managing the Guest Experience in Hospitality*, it is so different that we felt it was necessary to change the name. The book continues to be based on the principles of *guestology*, and that means we practice in writing this book what we teach in class. So, we kept some of the positive features of the earlier book while changing those that our readers said needed to be changed.

The book is based on much of what the first author learned when he came to Orlando to head the hospitality program at the University of Central Florida. There, he learned about many different aspects of the hospitality industry from The Walt Disney Company, and specifically about the principles of *guestology* from its “father,” Bruce Laval. Disney was then and still is today a benchmark hospitality organization. People come from all over the world to learn how to use Disney’s *guestological* techniques and apply those principles to their own guest-focused organizations. If there seems to be an abundance of examples in this book from Walt Disney World, there is a reason. This is a visible and familiar service exemplar that most students can relate to easily and which many have visited. Disney also provides an exceptionally wide representation of the hospitality industry. It has successful examples of restaurants from quick-serve to fine dining; lodging from campgrounds to upscale hotels; a transportation system that includes trains, boats, buses, and monorails; catering services, convention and meeting planning services, entertainment and night clubs, retail stores, golf courses, and cruise ships. These organizations include almost every specific job category in the hospitality field. The range of jobs for study on the Disney property—in terms of staffing, training, motivating, and job performance—is very wide. Disney hires and trains thousands of people annually to fill 1,100 different positions.

But there are many other exemplars: companies that use best practices to successfully deliver great service. Aside from Disney, there are many more examples from hotels, restaurants, amusement parks, airlines, and even others that may, at first glance, not appear to be in the service industry. In today’s business environment, almost all companies need to know how to provide exceptional service, or their customers will go to their competitors that can. We hope that you will be able to learn from these examples, from firms both familiar and new to you, and see the application of the principles and ideas in the book to whatever hospitality organizations are near you.

We also hope that you will find this book as clearly written and rich in content and real-world examples as its predecessor book. We worked hard to improve the things our student readers and faculty teachers liked while changing what needed to be changed. A lot has happened in the past decade, and this book contains new content to reflect those changes. We hope you like our work and invite you to tell us how well we did or where we could have done better. As practicing *guestologists*, we sought the input of many former guests and those who were seeking more coverage of managerial topics than is currently available in hospitality texts. We did what we tell you to do as practicing *guestologists*—ask, ask, ask your guests what they want, need, and

expect from an experience. After all, it doesn't matter what we think is a great book if our guests don't see it that way.

We have made two big changes while writing this book. The first involves the changes that have occurred with people. Guests of the late twentieth century are different from today's guests. The current generation of employees now entering the labor force is also different with different expectations, capabilities, and behaviors than the last. The second big change is in the forces impacting the organization. Competitors and the nature of competition have changed. Suppliers are different, technology is very different, and hospitality organizations have discovered that the global nature that all business operates in today impacts them too. We are all hooked together somehow and the result of these global connections is a change in how we manage the guest experience in hospitality.

We have made other changes as well to make the book more relevant in an era where social responsibility, ethics, and environmental concerns are increasingly part of the hospitality manager's world. In each chapter, we have added an ethical dilemma to discuss. Our references have been selected to give the student and instructor further information on each chapter's topics for expanding lectures, opening knowledge doors for papers, more in-depth study of related topics, and offering starting places for further research. We have also included classic references to allow the student to trace the evolution of ideas back to their roots.

Finally, we want to point out that customer service by itself will not save a bad strategy, ineffective staffing, or poorly designed and operated business systems. On the other hand, the research shows that once a business is efficiently run, customer service can give it a sustainable competitive advantage. A big friendly smile won't make up for a ruined meal but a wow service encounter with a well-trained and motivated server can make a routine experience into an unmatched wow that guests will remember and come back to have again. The exciting thing to us is how great an opportunity this is for gaining a competitive advantage over others in whatever hospitality business you are in. A quick look at the most recent American Customer Satisfaction Index (online) will show that most businesses are at the "C" level in providing customer satisfaction. Where else in the world can you be only a little above average to be seen as "outstanding"? We hope that the lessons learned and the concepts presented here will help you become accomplished guestologists and receive an "outstanding" from your guests.

## Purpose of the Book

This book is an attempt to organize, integrate, and present information about managing hospitality organizations, some of which comes from academic studies and some from the school of experience. It has been written to meet the needs of college classes devoted to or including exploration of this exciting, undeveloped area. It should also be of help to executives and managers who want to implement a guest-focused service strategy in any hospitality or service organization that wants to compete successfully in today's customer-driven market.

This book fills a void. Up until now, instructors and students in hospitality management classes have had to use a text that combined services marketing with some services management, with specific applications to restaurants, lodging, and other hospitality areas made by the instructor or by means of handouts and articles on serving guests in hospitality settings. *Managing Quality Service in Hospitality* fills that void. It combines the findings of the most significant research on services and hospitality services in particular with the best practices of leading hospitality organizations such as The Walt Disney Company, Marriott, The Ritz-Carlton, Darden Restaurants, Southwest Airlines, and many others.

In addition to reviews by numerous college and university instructors of hospitality, the material has been reviewed by practicing executives from many successful hospitality organizations, such as The Walt Disney Company, Starwood Hotels, Gaylord Hotels, Hyatt Hotels, Sodexo, Darden Restaurants, and Sheraton Hotels. These academic and practitioner reviews have assured that the text content is supported by sound theoretical underpinnings and real-world findings.

## The Hospitality Principles

*Managing Quality Service in Hospitality* represents theory that has passed the test of relevance. A proven principle of hospitality management keys each chapter of this book. Leading hospitality organizations have found these principles to be important, workable, and useful. They represent the key points to keep in mind when putting the book's material into practice. They can guide hospitality organizations and their managers as they seek to reach the levels of excellence achieved by the benchmark organizations.

## Systematic Sequence

To communicate the content of *Managing Quality Service in Hospitality* as clearly as possible, we have used a simple structure for the book so that its organization could be one of this book's major features. One section is devoted to each of hospitality management's three major concerns: *strategy*, *staffing*, and *systems*. Each of the fourteen chapters is keyed to a principle of successful hospitality management.

Section 1, *The Hospitality Service Strategy*, begins by Chapter 1 explaining some of the book's major concepts: some differences between products and services; what is meant by guestology; meeting customer expectations; the three parts of the guest experience; and the definitions of quality, value, and cost in a guest service context. This section then moves to Chapter 2's thorough coverage of the planning processes used to assess and meet guest expectations. Also explained are essential planning topics such as quantitative and qualitative forecasting tools; the importance of demographic trends; and the organization's service strategy origins in its vision, purpose, and mission, which themselves are based on the organization's careful assessment of guest expectations. Chapter 3 describes why the service setting or environment is crucial to service success. We have employed numerous examples to illustrate the principles and best practices of creating an appropriate setting. Section 1 concludes with Chapter 4's discussion of the importance to the hospitality organization of a total service culture and how to achieve it.

Section 2, *The Hospitality Service Staff*, covers how to recruit and hire "persons who love to serve" in Chapter 5, how to train them in Chapter 6, and then how to motivate and empower them to provide outstanding guest service in Chapter 7. A topic that many students and practitioners find particularly important is covered in Chapter 8, how the hospitality organization can, when the conditions are right, encourage and help guests co-produce, or participates in providing, their own experiences!

Section 3, *The Hospitality Service Delivery System*, shows how to glue the different parts of the guest experience together by communicating information to the right person at the right time, described in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 then describes the critically important tasks involved in planning and creating the service delivery system. This includes projecting to meet demand, monitoring the system, and engaging in continuous improvement. Because no organization's server/system combinations can match demand perfectly, Chapter 11 describes techniques for managing the inevitable waits for service. Chapter 12 presents some ways of measuring results in terms of service

quality and guest satisfaction so organizations and servers know how well they are meeting guests' expectations. All organizations try to provide perfect experiences, but the leading ones plan for the inevitable failures. Chapter 13 therefore focuses on how to avoid service failures and problems. But because no servers and systems have yet been devised that can provide so complex a service as the guest experience perfectly every time, we have also discussed planning for, finding, and fixing service failures when they occur. Section 3 and the book conclude with Chapter 14, which explains how the organization's people, units, and their efforts must be tied together to provide remarkable guest service that delights guests. That alignment—of strategy, staffing, and systems—is accomplished by outstanding organizational leadership.

### **Learning Objectives, Key Terms, and Discussion Questions**

Every chapter opens with a comprehensive set of learning objectives addressing the chapter's main points. The list of key terms and concepts serves as a brief preview of the subjects and ideas in the chapter to come. These terms and concepts are boldfaced the first time they appear in the chapter. The discussion questions at each chapter's end are designed to provoke thought and classroom interaction about chapter content and to enable students to make self-assessments of how well they have understood the material.

### **Activities and Case Studies**

Each chapter includes at least one hospitality activity to encourage students to visit local hospitality organizations and study them from the perspective of the book's ideas. Some activities suggest that students talk with guests, employees, and managers to obtain a variety of perspectives on the guest experience. Other activities suggest exploration of the Internet to visit sites established by hospitality organizations and to acquire further information on the book's concepts and ideas. Case studies provide an opportunity to discuss hospitality concepts and principles in terms of real (if disguised) and hypothetical hotels, restaurants, and other business types found in the hospitality industry.

### **Ethical Scenarios**

Unethical practices in business are a growing concern. Newspapers commonly report on scandals where someone has embezzled, stolen, forged, misappropriated funds, etc. But even when not dealing with blatantly illegal activities, employees and managers will likely be faced with tough decisions that require uncomfortable choices. The purpose of the "Ethics in Business" section, at the end of each chapter, is to raise such issues that students may need to wrestle with in the services industry. Each chapter presents an issue that students can think about and discuss regarding what is the "right" way to respond. Students are encouraged to consider different perspectives for each scenario, weighing how different individuals may consider the same situation in different ways.

### **Supplemental Materials**

#### *Student Online Companion*

Visit [www.cengagebrain.com](http://www.cengagebrain.com) for the student online companion to accompany this text. The student online companion includes learning objectives and key terms with definitions.

### *Instructor Resources to Accompany Text*

The Instructor Resources CD includes the Instructor's Guide, PowerPoint® lecture slides, and an ExamView® computerized test bank. The Instructor's Guide provides answers to the end-of-chapter review questions, answers to the discussion questions following the chapter cases, discussion points regarding the "Ethics in Business" scenarios, true-false and multiple-choice quizzes, and additional material to assist the instructor in preparing course outlines and lesson plans.

### **To the Student**

*Managing Quality Service in Hospitality* is designed for you. The material has been taught in many classes across the past decade to students with backgrounds similar to yours. The information presented is based on the best available research on services and hospitality services in particular, and on the best practices of leading hospitality organizations. The book should give you a thorough understanding of the principles of managing a hospitality organization. We hope you will want to keep the book if you enter the hospitality field or work in any of the many service organizations that dominate the economy. What we can learn from hospitality leaders is valuable in managing any customer-focused for-profit or nonprofit organization.

### **Primary Support Staff**

Once again and always, we thank our wives, Barbara Ford, Kelly Sturman, and Marieta Barrow Heaton, for unfailing support and for continuing to exceed our expectations; they put the wow! in our lives.

Robert C. Ford  
Michael C. Sturman  
Cherrill P. Heaton