



Fellows Broadsheet

The Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet is a thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows. Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family. The Fellows Broadsheet is published exclusively for members.

DEI in the Hospitality Industry: Progress and remaining challenges

Anoop Suri FIH, has been a member of the Institute of Hospitality for over 15 years and has worked in the hospitality industry for over 30 years.

He is based in India and works as an International Consultant, in regions of India, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, and Kurdistan.

In our latest Fellows Broadsheet, Anoop considers 'DEI in the Hospitality Industry: Progress and remaining challenges'.

The concept of DEI

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have become increasingly important topics in the hospitality industry worldwide. The concept of DEI revolves around recognising and valuing differences by creating an inclusive environment that encourages and supports all individuals, regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, gender reassignment, religion, age, class, disability, or sexuality. The hospitality industry, which is known for its diverse customer base, has a unique opportunity to showcase its commitment to DEI by promoting a culture of inclusion that welcomes and embraces diversity.

Why do we need DEI in hospitality

Hospitality is a people-centered industry that thrives on customer satisfaction. The industry's success depends on its ability to create an environment that is welcoming and accommodating to all customers, regardless of their backgrounds.

With consumers more likely to seek out businesses that reflect their values and beliefs, companies that embrace DEI are better positioned to attract and retain them.

However, DEI is not only about attracting customers but also about creating a work environment that is inclusive and respectful of all employees.

The hospitality industry is known for its high employee turnover rates, and a lack of DEI can contribute to this trend. Employees who feel undervalued or excluded are less likely to be engaged and committed to their jobs, leading to increased turnover rates and decreased productivity.

Embracing DEI and making people feel valued in the workplace is not only the right thing to do but also beneficial for hospitality businesses. By creating inclusive and respectful environments, businesses can attract diverse customers and employees, enhance their reputation, and improve their bottom line.

Some of the major issues of DEI in the industry include:

- Racism
- Gender inequality
- LGBTQ+ equality
- Religious equality
- Ageism



Embedding DEI

The hospitality industry has made progress embracing DEI. Many companies have implemented policies and programs aimed at promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

But companies need to take a holistic approach that addresses all aspects of their operations. This includes recruitment, training and development, marketing, and customer engagement. DEI practices that could be embedded could include:

- Recruitment and hiring practices designed to attract a diverse pool of candidates by partnering with organisations that serve underrepresented communities and by creating job postings that use inclusive language
- Providing unconscious bias training to recruiters and hiring managers to ensure that they are making unbiased hiring decisions
- Employee training and development could be more focused on promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, training could be provided on topics such as cultural competence, unconscious bias, and harassment prevention
- Establishing employee resource groups that provide support and networking opportunities for employees from underrepresented communities
- Customer engagement could be designed to create a more inclusive environment that welcomes and accommodates all customers and could include training employees to be culturally competent and sensitive to the needs of diverse customers ie language translation services, accommodating dietary restrictions, and ensuring that the physical environment is accessible to all
- Promoting diversity and inclusion through using diverse people on photographs and in marketing communications/ advertising and showcasing the cultural diversity of the product offerings.



For example:

Marriott International, one of the world's largest hospitality companies, has established a Diversity and Inclusion Council that is responsible for creating and implementing strategies to promote diversity and inclusion throughout the organization.

Establishing several employee resources groups to provide support and networking opportunities.

About the author

Anoop Suri FIH is an experienced hospitality management professional with over 30 years' experience leading large organizations to success.

He won the Best General Manager Award 2016 from Haute Grandeur Global Hotel Awards and is a Certified Hospitality Administrator (CHA). He has extensive experience in executing projects for setting up hotels and resorts, developing procedures, service standards and operational policies, and planning and implementing effective control measures to reduce running costs.

He has worked in various leadership positions including General Manager, The Grand Bhagwati and Royal Goan Beach Resorts, and as an International Consultant at Mongolia Food Safety and Nutrition Society.



References and useful resources

- 2022 state of the restaurant industry. NRA. (2022).
- Diversity & Inclusion. Marriott International.
- International perspectives on women and work in hotels catering and tourism - Human Rights Documents Online.
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