



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.

Creating the Hospitality Leaders of the Future

After years of working in the international hospitality and events industries, Lisa Wyld FIH is currently Head of Missenden Abbey International Hotel and Hospitality School in the UK.

She is the co-founder of Hospitality and Universities United (HUU), an initiative to bring together universities, students and the hospitality industry to 'bridge the gap' between academia and industry. And is also a member of the Executive Committee and track chair for Teaching, Learning and Assessment for the scientific committee for the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME).

Lisa also works as a hospitality consultant focusing on improving business performance and the retention of people within the industry, and has been a member of the Institute for nearly 25 years, joining as a university student.

In this month's Fellows Broadsheet, Lisa explores Creating the **Hospitality Leaders of the Future**, focusing on key attributes, attitudes and skills that will help the hospitality leaders of the future succeed and shine in a constantly changing, fast-paced environment.

Introduction

The global hospitality industry has undergone significant transformation in recent years, driven by technological advancements, shifting consumer preferences, and global events.

In this dynamic environment, I believe that the role of leadership is to adapt by embracing innovation and prioritising sustainability and resilience.

Technology has become an indispensable force in hospitality. From online booking platforms to mobile check-in and smart room controls, technology has become integral, revolutionising every aspect of guests' experiences and operational processes.

The leaders of the future need to be, not just tech-savvy, but also innovative. They should keep a pulse on emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and virtual reality, understanding how these can enhance guest experiences, streamline operations, and improve profitability. Forward-thinking leaders need to continuously seek opportunities to leverage technology to benefit both guests and the business.





Customer-centric leadership

At the heart of hospitality lies a fundamental principle: **to create exceptional experiences for guests.**

This pursuit of excellence is not merely about providing luxurious amenities or impeccable service; it is about understanding and connecting with guests on a deeper level, anticipating their needs, and exceeding their expectations. The ability to empathise with guests, to see the world through their eyes and understand their unique perspectives, is the cornerstone of guest-centricity.

In an era of increased competition and rapidly changing consumer preferences, customer-centric leadership is paramount.

Future hospitality leaders should prioritise understanding and exceeding guest expectations. This involves personalisation, sustainability, and a commitment to creating memorable experiences. It also requires the ability to gather and analyse data to better tailor services and offerings to individual preferences. Customer-centric leaders actively listen to feedback and adapt to meet evolving guest needs.

Empathetic hospitality leaders cultivate a culture where every employee embodies this principle, empowering them to go the extra mile for guests. They encourage open communication, fostering a dialogue that allows employees to understand and respond to guests' needs effectively.

This approach extends beyond individual interactions; it permeates every aspect of the organisation, from design decisions that prioritise guest comfort to operational processes that prioritise efficiency and minimise guest disruptions.

Customer-centricity is not a passive approach; it is an active commitment to continuously improving the guest experience. It involves gathering feedback from guests through various channels, analysing data to identify areas for improvement, and implementing changes that enhance the overall experience. This continuous feedback loop ensures that the organisation remains responsive to the evolving needs and preferences of its guests.

Empathy and customer or guest-centricity are not just buzzwords; they are essential elements of successful hospitality leadership, now and in the future. The future of hospitality belongs to those who prioritise empathy, embrace guest-centricity, and continuously strive to redefine the meaning of exceptional service.





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Environmental responsibility

The hospitality industry has a long and storied history, dating back to the earliest days of human travel and trade.

However, this industry is not without its impact on the environment. Sustainability is not just a trend; it's a necessity in the hospitality industry.

Future leaders must be deeply committed to sustainable practices, as guests increasingly demand eco-friendly options and ethical business operations. Sustainability in the form of reduced waste, energy efficiency, responsible sourcing, and community engagement will become integral to the industry. Leaders must drive sustainability initiatives both to meet guest expectations and to reduce environmental impact.

Sustainability is an ongoing journey, and there is always more that the hospitality industry can do to reduce its impact on the environment.

Hospitality leaders have a responsibility to continue to innovate and adopt new sustainable practices. And as the world becomes increasingly aware of the need for sustainability, the hospitality industry will only thrive if it embraces sustainable practices in the future.

Sustainability is essential for the future of the hospitality industry. By adopting sustainable practices, hospitality businesses can help to protect the environment, improve their brand reputation, save money, and increase employee engagement.

Future hospitality leaders have a responsibility to ensure that their businesses are operating sustainably and that they are setting an example for others to follow.

Cultural diversity

Hospitality serves a diverse global clientele, and future leaders should not just acknowledge but also celebrate cultural diversity. They should have a deep understanding of different cultures, languages, and traditions, enabling them to provide guests with authentic and respectful experiences. This goes beyond lip service; it means building teams that reflect the diversity of the guest base and implement inclusive policies and practices.

The hospitality industry thrives on diversity and inclusion, embracing the unique perspectives and experiences of individuals from all walks of life. Leaders must champion diversity in the workplace, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their talents.

This includes fostering a culture of open communication, addressing unconscious bias, and providing opportunities for professional development and growth for all employees.

By embracing diversity and inclusion, hospitality organisations tap into a wealth of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills, driving their success in an increasingly interconnected world.





Lifelong learning

The hospitality industry is constantly evolving, adapting to changing consumer trends, technological advancements, and global economic shifts.

Leaders must instil a culture of continuous learning and adaptability within their organisations, encouraging employees to embrace new skills, stay up to date on industry trends, and be open to change. This requires providing opportunities for professional development, supporting collaboration and knowledge sharing, and fostering a growth mindset that embraces learning as a lifelong journey.

Conclusion

Hospitality leaders of the future are catalysts for innovation, culture change, and sustainable practices. They possess a deep understanding of technology, empathy for guests, and a commitment to environmental responsibility. They champion diversity and inclusion, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability.

By championing these qualities, hospitality leaders will shape the future of the industry, ensuring it remains a vibrant and thriving sector that continues to redefine the boundaries of guest experiences and redefine the meaning of hospitality.

The future of hospitality leadership is not a solitary endeavour; it is a collective journey that requires collaboration, knowledge sharing, and a shared vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and technologically driven industry.

Hospitality leaders must embrace the ever-changing landscape, adapt to the evolving needs of guests, and champion responsible practices that ensure the industry's enduring success for generations to come.





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About the author

After years of working in the international hospitality and events industries for international chains, mega sporting events, independent businesses and exclusive events, Lisa Wyld FIH is Head of Missenden Abbey International Hotel and Hospitality School in the UK.

Teaching subjects related to events and hospitality, including consumer behaviour and experiences, and leadership challenges within the world of hospitality, Lisa has an inclusive, hands-on learning approach, delivering workshops and immersive activities to enable her students to learn together and challenge what they see, hear and read.

Lisa is fascinated by people and their behaviour, particularly the choices they make and how these connect with their values and experiences and enjoys mentoring.

She is the co-founder of Hospitality and Universities United (HUU), an initiative to bring together universities, students and the hospitality industry to 'bridge the gap' between academia and industry. And is also a member of the Executive Committee and track chair for Teaching, Learning and Assessment for the scientific committee for the Council for Hospitality Management Education (CHME).

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