



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.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the Hospitality Industry

Kan Koo FIH is a Director at Cosmo Restaurant Group and a multi-award-winning entrepreneur with 38 years of experience in the hospitality industry.

Kan is a Fellow of the Institute of Hospitality and has been a member of the Institute and former Hotel Catering Institutional Management Association (HCIMA) since 1987 when he joined as a student member.

In this Fellows' Broadsheet Kan looks at 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the Hospitality Industry', sharing his experiences and insights.





Fellows Broadsheet

What is DEI and Why Does it Matter?

As someone of Chinese origin, I firmly believe that a robust DEI policy and culture contribute to building stronger businesses.

DEI in the hospitality industry is a vital and multifaceted topic that requires continual attention as circumstances evolve. Post-Brexit and with the relaxation of rules allowing more foreign skilled workers into the UK, both business landscapes and cultures have needed to adapt.

Through my experiences, and at Cosmo Restaurant Group, we champion our own DEI policy.

Checklist for Success

- ✔ **Workforce Diversity:** Discuss the importance of having a diverse workforce in the hospitality industry, including benefits such as improved customer service, creativity, and innovation. Explore strategies for recruiting, training, retaining, and promoting employees from diverse backgrounds.
- ✔ **Cultural Competency Monitoring:** Explore the significance of providing cultural competency training to hospitality staff to ensure they can effectively serve a diverse clientele. Discuss how such training can improve customer satisfaction, business affinity, and loyalty.
- ✔ **Inclusive Workplace Policies:** Examine the development and implementation of inclusive workplace policies that promote fairness, equality, and respect for all employees regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, or disability. Our policy is consciously designed to accommodate most of the above.
- ✔ **Accessibility and Accommodations:** Discuss the importance of ensuring that hospitality facilities, services, and amenities are accessible and inclusive for customers with disabilities. Explore best practices for accommodating customers with diverse needs and preferences.
- ✔ **Representation and Leadership:** Explore the representation of diverse groups in leadership positions within the hospitality industry. Discuss initiatives aimed at increasing the representation of women, minorities, and other underrepresented groups in senior management and executive roles.
- ✔ **Cultural Sensitivity in Marketing:** Examine the role of cultural sensitivity in marketing and advertising within the hospitality industry. Discuss the importance of avoiding stereotypes and respecting cultural differences when targeting diverse audiences.
- ✔ **Supplier Diversity:** Explore the importance of supplier diversity initiatives in the hospitality industry, including sourcing goods and services from minority-owned, women-owned, and other diverse businesses. Discuss the benefits of supplier diversity for both businesses and communities.
- ✔ **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Discuss the role of hospitality businesses in supporting and engaging with diverse communities. Explore initiatives such as community outreach programs, partnerships with local organisations, and philanthropic efforts aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion.
- ✔ **Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Explore the role of employee resource groups in promoting diversity, inclusion, and belonging within hospitality organisations. Discuss the benefits of ERGs for employees, employers, and the broader community.
- ✔ **Measuring and Evaluating Diversity Initiatives:** Examine strategies for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives within hospitality organisations. Discuss key performance indicators (KPIs), metrics, and tools for assessing progress and identifying areas for improvement.



Award-Winning Ways

In February 2024, Cosmo proudly won a prestigious 'Signature Award for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion'. The business prides itself on having an internationally diverse group of employees at its heart and considers this to be one reason for its success. The other reasons cited by the judges were:

- **Cosmopolitan Cuisine:** The restaurants offer a diverse range of international cuisines, reflecting a cosmopolitan approach to dining. This could include dishes from various cultures and regions from across the world, providing customers with a global culinary experience.
- **Modern and Trendy Atmosphere:** Cosmo Group has a modern and trendy atmosphere, with sleek multi-culture decor, contemporary design elements, and innovative, inclusive culinary techniques or presentation styles to reflect and complement their diverse Chef's talents.
- **Upscale Dining Experience:** The branding and positioning of the restaurant, Cosmo, signifies an upscale dining experience with a 5-star environment but for a 3-star price, and a focus on a multicultural skilled team, high-quality ingredients, attentive service, and a sophisticated atmosphere.



Conclusion

Over the years, the hospitality industry has made significant progress in implementing and promoting DEI policies and programs. And these changes should never cease.

At Cosmo Group, we have taken a holistic approach that addresses all aspects of our operations. This includes recruitment, training and development, marketing, as well as the customer experience.

Our approach has fostered growth, profitability, consistent customer and employee engagement, and an excellent culture.





About the author

Kan Koo FIH is a Director of Cosmo Restaurant Group, a buffet-banquet restaurant chain serving authentic oriental and global dishes and operating 20 restaurants across the UK.

He has worked in the hospitality industry for 38 years and is passionate about his work and the industry.

His experience spans hotels, but his passion remains restaurants where he has focused and developed his career in operations and food and beverage development.

Working in senior-level roles for Rasa Sayang Restaurant Group, the Oriental Restaurant Group Plc, and Noble House Group, he joined the Cosmo Restaurant Group as a director in 2006.

Kan joined the Hotel Catering Institutional Management Association (HCIMA), now the Institute of Hospitality, as a student in 1987 and became a member of the Institute's College of Fellows in 2023.



Kan Koo FIH



CONNECT WITH
KAN KOO



References

- [1] Dr. Zaheer Ahmad MBE
- [2] Academy to Innovative HR .AIHR Academy. (2018). AIHR Academy | Digital HR Certification | People Analytics Courses.
- [3] Debiasing, Staff Culture