

# Hospitality Experience

An introduction to  
hospitality management



Noordhoff

**Frans Melissen, Jean-Pierre van der Rest,  
Stan Josephi, Robert Blomme (ed.)**

3<sup>rd</sup> edition



# Hospitality Experience

## An introduction to hospitality management

Editors:

**Frans Melissen**

**Jean-Pierre van der Rest**

**Stan Josephi**

**Robert Blomme**

Authors:

**Robert Blomme, Jeroen Bosman, Hans Breuker, Michael Chibili, Ankie Hoefnagels, John Hornby, Stan Josephi, Alinda Kokkinou, Annemieke de Korte, Xander Lub, Frans Melissen, Rob Nierse, Jeroen Oskam, Mark Pluymaekers, Monique van Prooijen-Lander†, Bert Smit, Lesley Tomaszewski, Rolf van der Veer, Tjeerd Zandberg**

---

Third edition

Noordhoff Groningen

Cover design: Shootmedia, Groningen

Cover illustration: Getty Images

Any comments concerning this or other publications should be addressed to Noordhoff Uitgevers bv, Afdeling Hoger onderwijs, Antwoordnummer 13, 9700 VB Groningen or via the contact form at [www.mijnnoordhoff.nl](http://www.mijnnoordhoff.nl).

*The information contained in this publication is for general information purposes only. No rights or liability of the author(s), editor or publisher can be derived from this information.*



0 / 22

© 2022 Noordhoff Uitgevers bv, Groningen/Utrecht, Nederland

This publication is protected by copyright. If you wish to (re)use the information in this publication, you must obtain prior written permission from Noordhoff Uitgevers bv.

ISBN (ebook) 978-90-01-29959-0

ISBN 978-90-01-29958-3

NUR 801

# Preface

Most textbooks on hospitality management focus on explaining – in detail – the ins and outs of today’s hospitality industry. They usually focus on hotels and how the various departments of traditional hotels function and interrelate. For instance, how do the banqueting department and the front office relate to each other, and what responsibilities do their managers have, and so on. As important as the answers may be, they are not the main topic of this book. As the editors and authors of *Hospitality Experience*, we would never claim that we could do a better job of answering these questions than the makers of other textbooks already out there.

However, we do like to think that *Hospitality Experience* is a valuable addition to the collection of books available to you to explore and reflect on important aspects of your current or future role as hospitality manager. As its title suggests, this book is about hospitality experiences. In it we answer one main question: how do you design, stage and manage successful hospitality experiences?

We discuss why we feel the answer deserves special attention throughout the book. It is what makes this book different. Like other hospitality management texts, it reflects on the now and future hospitality industry and the roles and responsibilities of hospitality managers. However, this book continually links these discussions to the crucial role of experiences in today’s highly competitive and ever-changing market. This allows us to predict why some hospitality businesses and managers will likely be more successful than others. It allows us to explain how other perspectives, not just a managerial one, can help in designing, staging and managing hospitality experiences both in and outside the hospitality industry. Finally, it allows us to establish what it all means for hospitality management and define the competencies required to excel in this profession, also within an international context.

This third edition of *Hospitality Experience* is the result of collaboration between our publisher, Noordhoff Publishers, and all five hotel management schools in the Netherlands. Please allow me to thank my fellow editors, Jean-Pierre van der Rest, Stan Josephi and Robert Blomme. In turn, the four of us are grateful to Noordhoff’s Petra Prescher for allowing us to create this third edition and our special thanks go to all the authors from the Dutch hotel management schools for assisting us in updating the content. Without you, *Hospitality Experience* would not exist. Finally, we would like to welcome you – our reader – to our updated views on hospitality experiences and hospitality management. We hope you feel a welcome guest in our ‘train of thought’ and that you enjoy and value the experience!

Frans Melissen  
Breda, September 2021



# Contents

- 1 The concept of hospitality 9**
  - 1.1 Hospitality? 11
  - 1.2 Origins and history 15
  - 1.3 The debate 20
  - 1.4 Managing hospitality experiences 26
  - 1.5 The remainder of this book 30
    - Summary 34
    - Food for thought 35
  
- 2 Adding value to the hospitality experience 37**
  - 2.1 The value chain of hospitality experiences 39
  - 2.2 Product levels 42
  - 2.3 Operating leverage 49
  - 2.4 Pricing 52
  - 2.5 Roles and functions 61
  - 2.6 The role and importance of data and analytics 64
    - Summary 67
    - Food for thought 68
  
- 3 The hospitality industry 71**
  - 3.1 The nature and scope of the hospitality industry 73
  - 3.2 Hotels and other lodging services 75
  - 3.3 Food and drink services 89
  - 3.4 Entertainment and recreation 92
  - 3.5 Travel service providers 94
  - 3.6 Assembly and event management 96
  - 3.7 Industry developments in marketing and distribution 97
    - Summary 99
    - Food for thought 101
  
- 4 Hospitality beyond the industry's borders 103**
  - 4.1 Hospitality revisited? 105
  - 4.2 Our society is changing 106
  - 4.3 The 'new and extended' role of hospitality 110
  - 4.4 Hospitality and networks 120
    - Summary 129
    - Food for thought 130
  
- 5 The future of hospitality 133**
  - 5.1 Predicting the future? 135
  - 5.2 Managers and envisioning the future 137
  - 5.3 Environmental analysis 138

- 5.4 The contextual environment [141](#)
- 5.5 The transactional environment: consumers [151](#)
- 5.6 The transactional environment: the industry [160](#)
- 5.7 The future of hospitality [164](#)
  - [Summary](#) [166](#)
  - [Food for thought](#) [167](#)
  
- 6 Designing hospitality experiences** [169](#)
  - 6.1 Reference points for the design process [171](#)
  - 6.2 Setting the stage for experiences [172](#)
  - 6.3 Personal context [177](#)
  - 6.4 Social context [182](#)
  - 6.5 Guest journey and touchpoints [186](#)
  - 6.6 The hospitality experience design process [192](#)
    - [Summary](#) [200](#)
    - [Food for thought](#) [202](#)
  
- 7 Delivering hospitality** [205](#)
  - 7.1 Hospitality and behaviour [207](#)
  - 7.2 Interaction and behaviour [212](#)
  - 7.3 Behaviour and satisfaction [217](#)
  - 7.4 Behaviour and feedback [220](#)
  - 7.5 Leadership [222](#)
    - [Summary](#) [227](#)
    - [Food for thought](#) [229](#)
  
- 8 Quality management in hospitality** [231](#)
  - 8.1 The importance of quality [233](#)
  - 8.2 Quality defined [233](#)
  - 8.3 Managing processes [243](#)
  - 8.4 Setting quality targets [246](#)
  - 8.5 Managing resources [252](#)
  - 8.6 Costs associated with quality [258](#)
  - 8.7 Making quality count [264](#)
    - [Summary](#) [266](#)
    - [Food for thought](#) [267](#)
  
- 9 Competencies and leadership** [269](#)
  - 9.1 Hospitality management as a profession [271](#)
  - 9.2 Leadership and management [272](#)
  - 9.3 Hospitality competencies [279](#)
    - [Summary](#) [288](#)
    - [Food for thought](#) [289](#)
  
- 10 The intercultural dimension of the hospitality experience** [291](#)
  - 10.1 Introduction [293](#)
  - 10.2 The culture phenomenon defined [294](#)
  - 10.3 Levels of mental programming [294](#)
  - 10.4 Levels of culture [296](#)
  - 10.5 Layers of culture [298](#)
  - 10.6 Complexities in the dialogue about culture [305](#)

10.7 Designing the intercultural hospitality experience [307](#)

10.8 Delivering the intercultural hospitality experience [316](#)

[Summary](#) [324](#)

[Food for thought](#) [325](#)

[References](#) [327](#)

[Acknowledgments](#) [335](#)

[About the editors and authors](#) [336](#)

[Index](#) [339](#)



# 1

# The concept of hospitality

*Frans Melissen*

This first chapter introduces you to the origins and history of the concept of hospitality and the debate in academia that has shaped our current interpretation of hospitality. We use the lessons that can be learnt from this to define hospitality experiences and explain our approach towards managing hospitality experiences. Finally, we provide an overview of the contents and explain the links between the remaining chapters of this book.

# Quotable quotes on hospitality

1

Here is a selection of quotes on hospitality that you will find if you type in the words memorable, quotes, and hospitality in a Google search:

'Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart.'  
— Washington Irving

'The hospitality of the wigwam is only limited by the institution of war.'  
— Charles Eastman

'I've got high standards when it comes to boys. As my dad says, all girls should! I'm from the South – Tennessee, to be exact – and down there, we're all about southern hospitality. I know that if I like a guy, he better be nice, and above all, my dad has to approve of him!'  
— Miley Cyrus

'When hospitality becomes an art it loses its very soul.'  
— Max Beerbohm

'No, Sir, you will have much more influence by giving or lending money where it is wanted, than by hospitality.'  
— Samuel Johnson

'When I sell liquor, it's called bootlegging; when my patrons serve it on Lake Shore Drive, it's called hospitality.'  
— Al Capone

'Hospitality is making your guests feel at home, even though you wish they were.'  
— unknown

'In hospitality, the chief thing is the goodwill.'  
— Greek proverb



Al Capone: the godfather of hospitality?

## 1.1 Hospitality?

Hospitality is a fascinating word we all use regularly. We all seem to have some sort of shared understanding of its meaning. Indeed, in our business – the hospitality industry – it is our shared reference point, the characteristic that distinguishes us from others. Many of us associate hospitality with particular emotions. This is why the quotes that kick off this chapter refer to things like the heart, the soul, and goodwill. If someone comments on a hotel or restaurant, for instance on a customer reviews site on the internet, in terms of ‘hospitality seems to be something unknown to them’ or ‘they lack the basics of hospitality’, you would probably think twice before booking a stay or dinner. Interestingly enough, many of us would feel confident we made the right decision not to book, even without information on the quality of the hotel’s rooms or the restaurant’s food. Somehow, the room and the food are not all that matters. Sometimes they are not the deciding factor for customers’ purchasing decisions, even if you could argue that they do represent the actual product on offer.

Shared understanding

Particular emotions

Ultimately, whether you are willing to pay for a room or food is determined by something more than objective facts and figures about that room or food. That something is usually related to what we call hospitality. Many of us feel perfectly comfortable using hospitality as an important consideration in our final decision. The fact that hospitality might be hard to define or to measure does not change that. An engineer would probably not get that. A scientist might accuse you of basing your decision on subjective data. An economist would tell you that your decision makes no sense without a proper cost/benefit analysis. And a hotel manager? He would tell you that you are right. He would have no problem referring to hospitality as the reason why you are willing to book a room in his hotel.

Hospitality

### Hospitality is not just a word

The previous section concluded that we all have a sort of shared understanding of what hospitality means. However, you could question whether this really is true. It is difficult to explain the exact meaning of hospitality and provide a definition that we all would agree with. In fact, ask ten people to define hospitality and you would probably get ten explanations. To understand this we need to realise that hospitality is not just a word; it also represents a concept. A concept is not something that you can point to or touch or take into your hands. A concept is something intangible that exists only in our minds. That is why most dictionaries define it as something conceived in the mind, as an abstract or generalised idea that relates to the characteristics of a particular object of thought. Hospitality is such an object of thought.

Concept

A key element of this explanation of concept is generalised. Concepts are not just ideas but generalised ideas. They do not describe just one instance of something, but rather what various instances have in common. To illustrate what this means, consider the concept of love. Once again, it is probably clear to most of us what this concept refers to. It is some sort of emotion. Love has something to do with affection and attachment. However, you can use the concept of love in various contexts. For instance, you could say you love your girlfriend or your mother. However, you can also love Christmas or a book or a boy band. You can love the colour green, or love

Contexts

doing nothing on a Sunday morning, or even love reading books on the concept of hospitality. All these examples refer to the same concept, but that same concept is applied in very different contexts. The concept stays the same, but the situations and actions it refers to are different. The same applies to the concept of hospitality.

● Gulfnews.com

## Jumeirah to be hospitality partner for Ladies Masters

Dubai-based luxury hospitality company, Jumeirah, has joined hands with 'golf in DUBAI' as the official caterer and hospitality partner for the omega Dubai Ladies Masters, at the Emirates Golf Club.



'We believe that 'golf in DUBAI' plays an important role in the development and promotion of this exhilarating game in our city. We are proud to be associated with them, and the quality of professional golfers and spectator experience that they bring to Dubai,' said Thatcher Brown, Jumeirah's vice president of brand strategy and management.

Mohammad Juma Bu Amim, vice-chairman and CEO of 'golf in DUBAI', said: 'The omega Dubai Ladies Masters gives a worldwide exposure to the city and the sponsors, creating interest for people to visit Dubai. Thanks to Jumeirah, the players always have a wonderful opportunity to savour the incomparable hospitality standards of the region.'

### **Hospitality is a mystifying concept**

However, although the concept of love can relate to very different contexts, you could argue that the basic feelings that are linked to love are always similar. Regardless of context, love refers to positive emotions. It refers to the opposite of hate and to liking something or someone instead of disliking

them. Therefore, love is a relatively clear and straightforward concept. The same does not apply to hospitality.

Indeed, this is exactly why hospitality is such a mystifying concept. Like any other concept, it can be used in various contexts and, somehow, using the concept 'hospitality' to describe what is happening does seem to help us to interpret the situation. However, unlike love, hospitality can refer to highly dissimilar emotions. For example, consider these two types of companies that operate in the hospitality industry.

Mystifying  
concept

Emotions

1

The first type is a chain of hotels that goes by the name Historic Hotels of America. These hotels are all about recreating and reliving the atmosphere of times long gone. To be part of this chain, a hotel must be at least 50 years old and must have historic significance. One hotel in this chain is the Wentworth Mansion. A quick tour of the website tells us that it offers 21 guest rooms and suites with antique furnishings, carved marble fireplaces, and oversized whirlpool tubs. Here, hospitality relates to such things as enjoying a book on the secrets of the history of the region you are visiting, sitting in a comfortable leather chair in front of a crackling fire, conveniently located just where the waiters can and will keep an eye on the level of bourbon in your glass.



Wentworth Mansion

The second type of company relates to the growing number of hotels and restaurants that offer guests the opportunity to experience dining in the dark. This concept originated in Switzerland in the early 1990s and has quickly spread over Europe and, more recently, is attracting attention in the USA. Hotels and restaurants offering these dinners usually refer to it as a unique experience. Apparently your taste buds, and senses of smell and hearing are stimulated very differently when your brain does not have to deal with visual stimuli at the same time. Dining in the dark allows guests to taste and experience a meal like they have never done before.



Dining in the dark

#### Industry

Without going into the details of what exactly is involved in dining in the dark, clearly a dinner like that would be quite different from a stay in the Wentworth Mansion. However, both the Wentworth Mansion and a hotel or restaurant offering dining in the dark are part of the industry dedicated to hospitality. What is more, both will tell you that they offer a unique hospitality experience. And that is where the mystifying, perhaps confusing side of the concept of hospitality comes in. Somehow, the same word can be used in very different contexts to describe very dissimilar experiences and it still makes sense. One and the same concept – hospitality – can refer to an experience based on history, luxury and comfort, supported by artefacts that you appreciate by sight (visual stimuli) and an experience based on surprise and the unexpected, supported by eliminating your sight (visual stimuli) altogether. It is important to note that these situations are just two examples of a much broader collection of very different situations and experiences, in and beyond the hospitality industry. Somehow all are related to the same concept of hospitality. A third example, mentioned earlier in this chapter, is the newsflash on Jumeirah and hospitality at the Dubai Ladies Masters golf tournament. The remainder of this chapter and subsequent chapters provide many more examples of the various ways in which hospitality can be interpreted and applied. Put together, these provide a clear explanation of the rich concept of hospitality, and the diverse situations and interpretations it encompasses. This diversity is why it is so hard to come up with one definition that would fit all situations in which hospitality plays a pivotal role.

#### Experiences

● goeurope.about.com, by James Martin, adapted

## Save yourself some grief, know what the star system means before you go

So you're wandering around Europe and notice stars prominently displayed in front of every hotel. Say you find one that has three stars. What does it mean? The short answer is: just about anything, but probably not what you're thinking. Let's get one thing straight, there is no unified definition of a three-star hotel across Europe. And another thing: most of the ratings are provided by the government, and will be a quantitative measure used to determine the price range (and sometimes the tax obligation) of a hotel. The ranges will overlap, so don't even look for that much consistency in price; a three star hotel may be more expensive than a four star, even in the same city. It depends.

You can make generalizations about hotel prices and the star ratings. A four star hotel will indeed cost more than a one star in the same city. The four star hotel will have more services and amenities, including meeting space for conferences. The one star will usually be very basic; not all rooms may have bathrooms in them. I usually look for two or three star hotels when I'm traveling in big cities. Today, most offer private baths in the (usually smallish) room and most of the time include television, a phone and occasionally even a mini bar. For a splurge that's often a good bargain, I'll look for a four star hotel in less touristy areas, especially when it's hot and I want a day with decent air conditioning.

Just remember – the ratings on the outside of the building are based on an objective facilities and services provided assessment and are not in any way related to ambience, charm or other subjective criteria.

To recognise, understand, and appreciate the various ways of interpreting and assessing hospitality requires a discussion on the origins and history of hospitality. Usually, when people interpret a concept differently, this is a sign that the concept is relatively young, that the final description or definition is still open to debate, or that the debate (temporarily) ended with an agreement to disagree. Whereas the latter could be argued to apply for hospitality, this does not mean that hospitality is the new kid on the block. Saying that could not be further from the truth.

## 1.2 Origins and history

Here we briefly discuss two perspectives on the origins and history of hospitality. The first reviews the origins of hospitality as a type of behaviour, separate from the context in which it takes place. The second looks at the origins and history of the hospitality industry.

**Perspectives**  
**Origins of**  
**hospitality**

### Hospitality as behaviour (Perspective 1)

Hospitality is not a recent trend and, unlike the internet, it is clearly not an invention of our current era. Some people argue that the origins of

hospitality can be traced back to our own origins or, more precisely, Homo sapiens (O'Connor, 2005). Hospitality can be seen as a key concept in the way a newcomer tried to claim membership of a group. In offering the food that he has hunted down, a newcomer hopes to establish a relationship with a group so that they will share their food in return. Daniel O'Connor explains in his paper on this topic that similar expressions of hospitality, usually in the form of feasting, can still be found in remote ancient societies, such as those in the New Guinea Highlands and the Amazon rainforest. However, he emphasises that hospitality in these contexts is often closely related to its opposite, hostility. A feast can easily turn into a fight. On the one hand, we can see hospitality and hostility as the extremes of a continuum that represents all possible expressions of a relationship. On the other hand, these two extremes are very closely linked. As the French would put it, *Les extrêmes se touchent*. From the perspective of our 21st century, most of us would probably associate hospitality with pleasant emotions. However, the Charles Eastman quote at the start of this chapter points out that this might be an oversimplification, considering that hospitality can also be linked to the institution of war. All this means that from an historical perspective, hospitality is not just a one-dimensional, happy-go-lucky concept.

Hostility  
Hospitality  
Relationship



Castle Hotel Adare in Ireland

Indeed, in medieval times hospitality was a serious topic. To display hospitality was a matter of honour and morality. Julie Kerr (2007) explains in her discussion on hospitality in twelfth-century England that in this era of kings, dukes and knights, people felt greatly concerned with etiquette and outward display. Engaging in hospitality was guided by strict procedures for both hosts and guests. Adhering to these procedures was important, because the act of hospitality was considered a chance for both guest and host to demonstrate their courtliness, improve their relationship, 'and for the host to exhibit his generosity and largesse of spirit' (Kerr 2007, p. 130). The display of generosity is closely related to the central theme of

Honour and  
morality

religious parables that tell the story of how one person disguised as poor traveller tests another person's hospitality. In this context, hospitality refers to unselfish commitment and altruism. In other words, it refers to behaviour that shows someone's good intentions and willingness to help others without expecting anything in return. Both Kerr's discussion on medieval times and the religious parables show how, for many centuries, the concept of hospitality was linked to cultural and religious norms for offering a needy stranger a place to stay, and food and drink, without ulterior motive or expecting a reward.

Unselfish  
commitment and  
altruism

Cultural and  
religious norms

'Because you have offered him lodgings he must be protected and safeguarded from capture and death.' (Chrétien de Troyes, *The Story of the Grail*, in *Arthurian Romances*, translated by William W. Kibbler)

The cultural or religious norms we referred to above considered hospitality a virtue, or, more precisely, as appropriate behaviour. Clearly, however, these norms 'no longer have the moral force they once had' (Lashley, 2008, p. 83) in today's society. In other words, what people in the past would think of as appropriate behaviour is probably different from how we would assess that behaviour today.

Virtue

● KPI Hospitality Service, adapted

## Disguised as a poor traveller, version 2.0?

These two little excerpts from a mystery guest report are a clear example of why many people still consider hospitality a type of behaviour, even in the 21st century hospitality industry. The management of a hotel or restaurant hires mystery guests to visit their sites and provide feedback on their staff's performance, without revealing what they are there to do. After reading these excerpts, ask yourself if this is any different from disguising yourself as a poor traveller, in days long gone, to test your host's hospitality.

'We were having trouble finding the accommodation, so I phoned ahead and asked for directions. A staff member answered with 'Good afternoon, X Lodge, Linda speaking.' When I told Linda that we were having trouble finding the right road, she was very understanding and friendly and pointed me in the right direction. She also told me how long it would take me to get there from where we were, which was handy to know. When we drove up to the resort, a staff member noticed our arrival and came out to the car to greet us. She said, 'you must be Mr Smith?' When I said yes, she shook my hand and introduced herself, 'Hello, I'm Linda, welcome! you made it okay?' Linda was dressed smartly and looked very presentable. She smiled warmly and was easy to chat to. She was calm and gentle, which made me feel relaxed. She offered to carry our bags and anything else we may have wanted to offload. We chatted casually about the rough drive up to the resort and where the staff resided. Linda mentioned that she understood it was our wedding anniversary to which, I said 'yes.' She then told us that they had upgraded our room to a spa suite. 'It was available tonight, so I put you in there.' We were very grateful.'

‘We were served by Jack, who was quite helpful. Jack directed us to where we would find the bikes and showed us on a map where to go. He advised us on the most suitable ride for that time of day and our level of biking experience. Although Jack handled this perfectly, he did not ask if there was anything else he could help us with.’



### Hospitality behaviour

The first perspective emphasises that hospitality behaviour can be found everywhere and is far from restricted to the hospitality industry. We find it important to study the various situations and learn how hospitality manifests itself. You can then use this knowledge to understand the concept of hospitality and operate successfully in the hospitality industry.

### Hospitality as an industry (Perspective 2)

In contrast, some people prefer the second perspective, arguing that it is wiser to stick to the hospitality industry in exploring the origins and history of hospitality. They feel it makes no sense to trace the evolution of Homo sapiens or behaviour in the medieval era to assess hospitality in the 21st century. They claim that the history of the actual hospitality industry contains far more important lessons for interpreting, assessing and, especially, managing hospitality in today's world.

### Commercial hospitality

In his study on the historical roots of the industry, Kevin O’Gorman (2009) concludes that commercial hospitality has existed for at least 4,000 years. He illustrates this with three examples. The first refers to ancient Mesopotamia, where there were laws governing commercial hospitality as early as 1,800 BC. O’Gorman claims that by 400 BC, commercial hospitality – hostels and inns providing food, drinks, accommodation and women to strangers – had evolved into a distinct, separate sector of the economy and a key source of revenue. The second example relates to the Roman city of Pompeii. The fossilised city that remained after Mount Vesuvius’ eruption in 79 AD has provided us with clear indications of hospitality industry contours in a Roman-era city. Evidence suggests that various types of hospitality establishments were found in Roman cities, ranging from a hospitium (offering rooms for rent, mostly aimed at business guests) and a popina

caupona (a public eating house) to a taberna thermopolia ganeae (a simple counter for selling foods and drinks) and various combinations of these establishments. The commercial motives of these establishments are evident, because even in those days you would find advertisements and a menu of the day. The final example O’Gorman discusses is caravanserais (hostels for travellers), for instance along the Silk Route (trading routes stretching from Istanbul, through Iran, to China). Once again, it seems that travelling business people created a demand for lodging, food and drinks, which an extensive system of hospitality establishments accommodated.

Lodging, food  
and drinks

1



Pompeii

### Could both perspectives be true?

Obviously, these are but a few of the establishments and arrangements that could represent the origins of today’s hospitality industry. Especially the researchers who have studied classical texts will be able to provide us with many more. However, some researchers have suggested that this perspective on the hospitality industry is rather romantic and might not tell the full story of what actually happened. Clearly, some establishments described above and similar examples from the medieval era bear a close resemblance to today’s hotels, restaurants and other accommodations. Most hotels are still about offering rooms for rent to travellers, both business people and tourists. Restaurants still provide food and drink to travellers and local residents. The set up of today’s hospitality industry could be argued to be the result of an evolutionary process lasting 4,000 years. It all seems to make perfect sense.

Evolutionary  
process

The key word in that last sentence, though, is ‘perfect’. Maybe it is a bit too perfect to be true. What if the industry is indeed the result of an evolutionary process, but the name chosen to represent it is actually ‘an early attempt at spin’ (Lashley, 2008, p. 69)? In other words, what if the name hospitality industry is actually an attempt at swaying public opinion, much like a spin doctor (the spokesman of a politician) would give us a more positive interpretation of a decision that could damage his boss’s reputation. Some people who were involved in the debate on the origins and interpretation of hospitality certainly seemed to think so. They claimed that associating the name hospitality to the industry providing food, drink and accommodation in the exchange for money is actually a modern invention. In their view, the choice of this name could be an attempt to ‘create a more favourable

Invention

impression of [the] commercial activities' (Lashley, 2008, p. 69) in this sector of our economy. Earlier, many people concluded that the word hospitality is associated with something like a virtue and, therefore, primarily evokes positive emotions. What better way to market your company than to point out that your primary concern is the well-being of your guests, your customers, instead of making money?

All this brings us back to a key question that needs answering in a book focused on hospitality management. Does hospitality refer to behaviour, to an industry, or to both? To understand what exactly needs to be managed and how best to do it, we first need to answer this question. Therefore, the following section addresses the debate that raged for years and years, especially in academic circles, on the appropriate way to interpret this fascinating, mystifying concept.

### 1.3 The debate

Section 1.2 pointed out that the word hospitality can be linked to cultural and religious norms, to virtues and morality, and to unselfishness and altruism, but also to an industry that mostly consists of businesses that provide accommodation, food and drink in exchange for money. You could say there were and really still are two distinct schools of thought with respect to interpreting and assessing hospitality. On the one hand, we have people interested in discussing the meaning of hospitality in terms of norms that were based on Biblical texts, the world view of the ancient Greeks and the strict behavioural rules for knights in medieval times. This school of thought is primarily interested in understanding hospitality as inextricably linked to human behaviour, regardless of the context in which the behaviour takes place.

On the other hand, we have people who are mostly interested in how best to manage hospitality products and services, such as the provision of accommodation, food and drink, in companies that need to make money to exist. This second school of thought is likely more interested in revenue management to maximise profits based on selling those products and services in a fiercely competitive global market. Given the very different starting points for these two schools of thought, it should come as no surprise that the concept of hospitality was the topic of heated debate among academics, and both academics and practitioners sometimes still struggle to define it.

#### Two schools of thought, linked or not?

The next question is whether we should regard these two schools of thought as separate entities that study clearly different unrelated topics, or whether they could actually help and strengthen each other. A central topic of the debate concerned the different answers to that question. What is the relation, if any, between understanding hospitality as a part of human behaviour, and treating hospitality and hospitality management as an

Businesses

Schools of thought

Human behaviour

Products and services

industry and profession? Maybe the best way to illustrate the debate content is to highlight the views of two authors mentioned above, Daniel O'Connor and Kevin O'Gorman. Please consider the following four statements:

'Only once an understanding of hospitality's origins and its place in human nature is achieved can one expect to discover what hospitality means today, and more importantly what it will mean to those entering the industry in the future.' (Daniel O'Connor, 2005, p. 267)

'However, with the knowledge of such a thin line existing between hospitality and hostility, it is up to the hospitality industry to be wary of it and, if possible, use it to its advantage. In other words, in order to differentiate one's product from the competition, and gain the highly sought competitive advantage, it is essential to eradicate any feelings of paranoia a guest may have.' (Daniel O'Connor, 2005, p. 269)

'Hospitality management research should focus on deepening understanding of management practice within the industry, separate from domestic hospitality practices; that is best left to anthropologists and sociologists who have the necessary training and research skills.' (Kevin O'Gorman, 2009, p.788)

'There is nothing wrong with providing a commercial hospitality service within particular institutional forms (now called the hospitality industry, but known by an assortment of different names in the past). Hospitality research should focus on deepening understanding of the industry; learning from the past will help to inform the future.' (Kevin O'Gorman, 2009, p.788)

At first glance, these statements seem to reflect perspectives that are miles apart with regards to hospitality, the hospitality industry and hospitality management. O'Connor's statements suggest that the hospitality industry can only advance if it focuses on genuine hospitableness, also in recruiting new employees. Here, hospitableness refers to 'service with a smile' and meaning it. Obviously, this perspective is closely related to regarding hospitality as a virtue. Consequently, making your guests feel at home while wishing they were (at home) – the wise words often shared with newcomers to the industry by those that have paid their dues – might actually represent bad advice. Furthermore, this perspective implies that the customers' act of paying for hospitality should be organised and managed such that it minimises the chances of customers feeling betrayed.

Genuine  
hospitableness

In contrast, O'Gorman's statements stress that, ultimately, we are dealing with an industry that is mostly made up of commercial enterprises. Therefore, it would make perfect sense to consider management the key in the concept of hospitality management. You needn't feel uncomfortable about it being an economic transaction. Goodwill, as the Greek proverb on the first page of this chapter suggests, is all very nice, but, ultimately, we are in it to make money.

Hospitality  
management



Las Vegas: Hospitality as a means of making money?

The two views seem at the very least conflicting, and possibly even irreconcilable. If you took O'Connor's and O'Gorman's statements literally, in other words, if you applied black and white thinking on them, it is not difficult to understand why the debate on the true meaning of the concept of hospitality that quite a few academics engaged in for a number of years was so heated. However, we had a reason for saying 'at first glance' above. As interesting as the debate may have been from a purely intellectual viewpoint, you could say that much of it can be traced back to semantics and simple differences of opinion on the relative importance of various perspectives. This does not necessarily mean that other perspectives are not important or do not deserve further inquiry. Indeed, if we took another look at O'Gorman's first statement, you could say that he is simply suggesting that hospitality researchers and hospitality managers should focus on the things that lie at the core of their discipline, what they have been trained to do. His statement does not imply that researchers from distinct disciplines should not talk to or learn from each other. He does not suggest that hospitality managers could not benefit from the lessons learnt from viewing hospitality as an integral part of human behaviour.

Similarly, O'Connor does not deny that the hospitality industry is a commercial sector. He does not suggest that making a profit from providing hospitality (services or products) is unacceptable. His statements simply acknowledge that the concept of hospitality is closely linked to human nature and to what people feel is acceptable behaviour. Smart hospitality managers realise that these matters are important aspects to consider in the context of the hospitality industry and hospitality management.

### **Context is the key**

Maybe the reason that the debate described above seems to have calmed down over the course of time is the realisation that the key to reconciling the two perspectives is actually pretty straightforward and obvious; recognising that the hospitality industry is made up of a vast array of very different types of hospitality establishments and activities. Obviously, you cannot compare a quick meal in a fast food outlet around the corner with a stay in a Hilton or Marriott hotel. Going for the experience of a dinner in the

dark is very different from buying food and having a quick shower at a (gas) station along your route through the Australian outback. The feelings and emotions related to various activities are quite different and the reasons why customers engage in them are different. Surely, all establishments can be considered parts of the hospitality industry. However, it is just as clear that they are very different and provide hospitality in different ways and circumstances.

So, the hospitality industry consists of various establishments and activities with clearly distinct characteristics. It is reasonable to assume that there is more than one way to interpret and assess hospitality in relation to all these establishments and activities.

### **Accommodation, food, drink and...**

All this means that we need to consider context in establishing the appropriate perspective on hospitality for a given situation. What is more, this same context plays a vital role in determining whether the provision of any combination of elements in the 'holy trinity' (Brotherton, 1999) of accommodation, food, and drink should be regarded as engaging in an act of hospitality or not. Brotherton (1999) uses the example of prisons to clarify this in his discussion on hospitality and hospitality management. A prison provides accommodation, food and drink to inmates. If we define hospitality as simply the provision of any one or a combination of the three elements, as some authors suggest, the prison service would qualify as hospitality. Yet, instinctively or intellectually, most of us would probably not agree with this verdict. Consequently, some contributors to the hospitality debate suggested that we needed to add another criterion related to the manner in which accommodation, food and drink are provided. What if the prison guards and catering personnel happen to be genuinely hospitable people? Would this mean that the cells given to inmates and the catering services provided to them would suddenly qualify this prison as hospitable? Again, for most of us this would not feel right. This seems to be very different from the fascinating, mystifying concept we discussed earlier in this chapter.

Context

Holy trinity

### **Hosts and guests**

The additional criterion needed to establish a clear perspective on what represents hospitality relates to the people involved and the way they interact. In fact, as Brotherton (1999) points out, this relationship between hosts and guests lies at the core of the concept. No matter the circumstances, hospitality acts cannot exist without the involvement of people. One person or group – the host – offers hospitality to another person or group – the guest. In some situations guests compensate their hosts for hospitality received. For instance, a hotel guest pays to stay in a room, while a restaurant customer pays to have dinner. You would often find these host-guest relationships in the commercial hospitality industry. However, there are instances of hospitality that do not involve the exchange of money. A clear example is when you offer a friend, or even a stranger, a place to stay or a meal in times of need without expecting financial reward for your act of hospitality. These acts are usually referred to as domestic hospitality.

Host

Guest

Host-guest relationships

### Three different domains

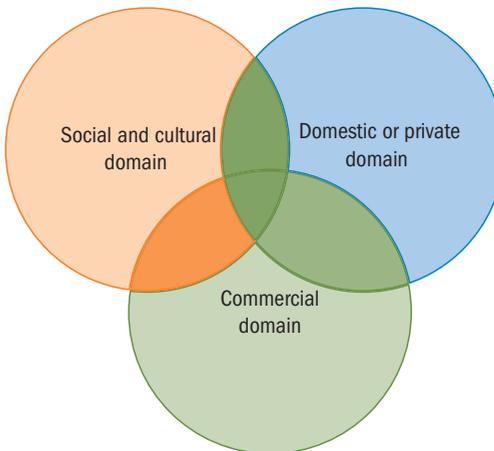
Based on the discussion so far, we can conclude that

- 1 hospitality is the provision of (a combination of) accommodation, food, drink and involves a host and a guest;
- 2 there are various kinds of hospitality and depending on the context, there are different ways to interpret and assess it.

It is useful to distinguish between different acts of hospitality, involving different hosts and guests in different contexts. Conrad Lashley (2000) suggested the three domains of hospitality depicted in Figure 1.1. We can use these domains as a framework for interpreting and studying the concept of hospitality. Ever since Lashley put his framework forward, many academics and practitioners have referred to it in discussing the meaning and implications of hospitality.

#### Domains

FIGURE 1.1 Three domains of hospitality



#### Social and cultural level

The first domain relates to the social and cultural level. It provides the context for studying and interpreting cultural and religious norms, the rules and obligations connected to eras and societies, and also, for instance, the relationships between a host nation and guests in the form of asylum seekers and migrants. At this level we could assess the impact of tourists on local residents, the host community in the tourism context. Obviously, this could have interesting implications for hospitality management, because many of these tourist establishments are part of the hospitality industry, and many employees working in them are members of the host community.

#### Domestic or private level

The second domain is the domestic or private level and deals with hospitality in home settings. Offering a free bed to a friend in need is a clear example of hospitality in this domain. This domain is also linked to hospitality management and the hospitality industry. For instance, homeowners offering students a room for rent, or people who turn their homes into a small bed and breakfast establishment. Or, people renting out a room or their complete apartment or house through platforms such as Airbnb,

which can result in heated discussions between various stakeholders on whether this is still part of this second domain or actually part of the commercial hospitality industry, thus requiring the owner to follow rules and regulations applicable to operating in that industry. The particular example shown here, of a New York City judge ruling that renting out a room through Airbnb should be regarded as operating an illegal hotel, is from 2013 – the early days of such platforms. However, these platforms and their impact have grown significantly ever since and similar discussions are still taking place today all over the world. Apparently, there is a fine, complicated line between the second domain and the third one, the commercial level.

Commercial level

● newsfeed.time.com, adapted

## NYC judge rules Airbnb rental is an ‘illegal hotel’

Airbnb, a site that lets people around the world find short-term housing accommodations, suffered a major setback this month when a judge ruled that one of its users broke an ‘illegal hotel’ law in New York City.

The trouble began last September, when Nigel Warren rented out his bedroom in his East Village apartment on Airbnb for three days. Even though his roommate was home and there was no reported misbehavior, New York City’s special enforcement officers slapped fines of more than \$40,000 on Warren’s landlord for violating illegal transient hotel rules, according to the New York Times. New York City law restricts residents from renting out apartments, or rooms in them, for fewer than 30 days, unless they are also living in the home during the guests’ stay.

This last domain is the topic of this book. It is important to realise though that industrialised hospitality and mass tourism cannot be interpreted and assessed in complete isolation from the other two domains. The Airbnb example has already clearly illustrated this and we will discuss many more examples and links later on. For now, let us note that hospitality cannot be discussed sensibly without addressing its context and the behaviour and traits of the hosts and guests involved. So, our study of the third domain would benefit if we also addressed the other two domains.

Does this mean the debate on what hospitality and hospitality management constitute is now a thing of the past? Have we reached consensus and can we move on? Well, maybe not. On-going and new developments, many of which will be discussed in this book, can easily lead to new discussions on the boundaries between the different domains of hospitality and whether particular contexts warrant calling the behaviour of people involved hospitality acts or not. Simultaneously, most of the debaters who participated in the original academic debate by now seem to acknowledge that you can and should interpret and assess the concept of hospitality from various perspectives and doing so actually helps us understand it

better and improve the way we manage it. You could argue that, instead of continuing the debate, we have now moved on to a stage in which the study of hospitality has become a multidisciplinary affair; a situation in which most academics and professionals seem to accept that applying different perspectives on this concept is actually not a bad thing but helpful and possibly even a blessing in disguise, especially in making sense of new developments and challenges.

### **Defining the hospitality industry is not easy**

The distinction into three domains of hospitality has contributed constructively to the structure of the debate on hospitality. However, it does not mean the debate is now completely over, especially not with respect to the follow-up question: How can we define the hospitality industry? In Chapter 3, we try to answer this question pragmatically.

To illustrate both the complications and emotions related to trying to define such a heterogeneous (dissimilar) industry, consider the following excerpt from a paper dedicated to the topic:

'The hospitality industry is represented in every country in the world and is diverse and complex. It encompasses a range of free-standing hospitality businesses and is also a component of a wide range of venues whose primary function is not hospitality.  
[...]

As hospitality venues develop in size and complexity they include commonplace activities that do not fit with the three-domainers' conception of hospitality. For example, most mid-market, up-market and luxury hotels have facilities to meet demand for conferences and health clubs. Similarly, cruise ships, theme parks, motorway service areas and multi-leisure centres have integral components that fall outside the scope of the three-domainers' definition. A vivid example is from Las Vegas where there are 29 venues, each with more than 1,000 rooms.

Each venue also includes a major casino, a restaurant campus, at least one theatre, a conference and exhibition centre, a shopping mall, a health club, one has an aquarium, one has a circus and Bellagio and the Venetian each incorporate an art gallery. [...] This range of activities is legitimate and complementary for the companies and it is nonsense to imagine that only the parts of these companies that fit with the three-domainers' definition can be considered to be hospitality. It would be even worse to exclude these businesses from the definition of the hospitality industry and place them outside the scope of hospitality management teaching and research.' (Paul Slattery, 2002, pp. 23-24)

## **1.4 Managing hospitality experiences**

The title of this book is *Hospitality Experience* and its subtitle is 'An introduction to hospitality management'. The title represents the choice we made with respect to the focus of this textbook and the perspective we chose with respect to interpreting and assessing hospitality and hospitality management. In this section we refer to the lessons that can

be learnt from all the above to explain our choices and perspective. They serve as the main reference points in the rest of this chapter, and those that follow.

### **Hospitality management and the experience economy**

In today's society, simply delivering a service or selling a product is usually not enough to lure the customers needed to survive in a highly competitive and fluctuating market. Somehow, as customers we value not just the service or product but also the way in which it comes our way. The way in which we experience a service or product influences the value we attach to it. It even affects how much money we are willing to spend on it. A critical element of this experience relates to our interaction with the service or product providers. A mobile phone named after a fruit cannot be compared to one that may be just as good from a functional point of view, but bears a logo we do not know. A cup of coffee served with a smile does not taste the same as one that must have been too hot when it was poured and so has hurt the waiter's hands to the extent he is sulking when he hands you your coffee. Experience has become a key concept in today's society and economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), and the hospitality industry is no exception to that rule.

Interaction



Pine and Gilmore's book bears the telling name *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*

As the name suggests, the type of experiences at the core of this sector of our economy, the hospitality industry, are hospitality experiences. Like most other experiences, they relate to personal interactions. However, personal interactions can be differentiated from other forms of interaction (see also Brotherton & Wood, 2000). As we said earlier, hospitality interactions involve a relationship between a host and a guest in a specific context and entail the provision of accommodation and/or food and/or drink.

If you are familiar with *Hospitality: A Social Lens* (2007), edited by Conrad Lashley, Paul Lynch and Alison Morrison, you will notice that our reference point closely resembles the train of thought these authors present in their book and, especially, two definitions of hospitality they quote to set the stage in their first chapter. The first of those quotes is:

'A contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered into, and designed to enhance the mutual well-being of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation, and/or food and/or drink.' (Bob Brotherton, 1999, p. 168)

The second quote is:

'It represents a host's cordial reception, welcome and entertainment of guests or strangers of diverse social backgrounds and cultures charitably, socially or commercially with kind and generous liberality, into one's space to dine and/or lodge temporarily. Dependent on circumstance and context the degree to which the hospitality offering is conditional or unconditional may vary.' (Allison Morrison and Kevin O'Gorman, 2006, p. 3)

### **Our definition of hospitality experiences**

These two definitions clearly highlight the key elements of the perspective we apply in this book for interpreting and assessing hospitality experiences. First, a hospitality experience is related to the interaction between a host and a guest. Second, it is crucial that these two parties engage voluntarily in the interaction for an experience to qualify as hospitality. Otherwise, situations like the prison case would qualify as hospitality as well. Third, the interaction needs to involve the host providing either one or a combination of accommodation, food or drink to the guest to qualify as a hospitality experience. And finally, the interaction context determines the rules and norms of appropriate behaviour for the parties involved.

So, now we are ready to define hospitality experiences:

A hospitality experience is a voluntary interaction between host and guest, in which the host provides accommodation and/or food and/or drink to the guest and the context determines the applicable rules and norms for the behaviour of both parties.

### **A multidisciplinary approach**

It should now also be clear that interpreting and assessing hospitality experiences in all its many and varied contexts requires a multidisciplinary approach firstly because the context determines the rules and norms that apply to the interaction. Once again, Lashley's three domains (2000), the social and cultural, the private and domestic, and the commercial, really help to explain this. For instance, understanding the impact of tourists on local residents – including damage to the natural environment and benefits such as new jobs and stimulus to the micro-economy – clearly requires a different approach than understanding the impact of dining in the dark would. Setting up a bed and breakfast is not the same as giving a friend in need a place to stay. All these interactions between hosts and guests are hospitality experiences, but truly understanding them requires insights from

**Interaction  
between a host  
and a guest**

**Hospitality  
experiences**

**Multidisciplinary  
approach**

**Context  
Interaction**

various disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, biology, economics and management.

The second reason why a multidisciplinary approach is crucial here relates directly to the subtitle of this book, *An introduction to hospitality management*. This suggests a focus on management issues. And yes, one of our objectives is certainly to provide insights for future hospitality managers to help prepare them for the hospitality industry. However, in trying to reach this objective, it would be a mistake to ignore non-management issues and insights from other fields and professions. Hospitality management is not just a combination of two words. We cannot fully comprehend the meaning of hospitality management without understanding the two concepts – management and hospitality – that lie at its core.

Managing something that you do not understand is a 'Mission impossible'. Even if we limit our scope to experiences in the commercial hospitality industry, managing hospitality experiences still requires insight into the types of hospitality experiences that are financially successful. Once we know which experiences lead to success, the next question is how to stage these experiences. What resources do we need to make sure that guests will experience our service or product so that they will come back for more and tell their friends and family about it? Given the fact that hospitality experiences involve customers' interaction with your employees, what does this mean for their behaviour? What is the optimal combination of accommodation, food and drink for a particular interaction? These are but a few of many key questions we need to answer to successfully manage hospitality experiences. Again, the answers require insights from other fields than just management science.

Management  
issues

Management  
and hospitality

1



The optimal combination of accommodation, food, drink and interaction?

1

Although guests may expect and be willing to pay for hospitality experiences in the commercial hospitality industry, this does not mean that we can simply ignore all the rules and norms related to hospitality in other domains. As we discussed earlier, there may be three separate domains of hospitality, but that does not mean that they exist in isolation. Some hospitality experiences might be linked to two or even three domains. Sometimes they are even set up that way on purpose. For example, the bed and breakfast located in the same building as where the owner lives. The idea behind this concept is usually to make you feel as if you are staying with a family, someone you like and can talk to, instead of a room in impersonal mass tourism accommodation. However, even if a hospitality experience is set up strictly as a commercial transaction, and nothing more, this does not automatically mean that the way the guest experiences it will relate only to the rules and norms of the commercial domain.

This chapter started out by stating that hospitality is both a word and a concept that means something to most of us. Simultaneously, what it means to one person or group is not necessarily the same as what it means to someone else or another group. We have all been taught different things. We have all grown up in different circumstances and communities, in the very different societies that together shape our world. Hospitality means something different to all of us. Whether or not a hospitality experience has been set up from a strictly commercial perspective does not change this, nor does it stop us from taking our own perspective and following our own rules and norms in the final verdict. Hospitality managers can use all the help they can get in managing all this. Thus a multidisciplinary approach to managing hospitality experiences is a must.

To conclude this section, maybe it is wise to refer again to Brotherton's (1999, p. 165) attempt to 'create a clearer view of what hospitality and hospitality management are.' He concludes that it is vital to realise that 'hospitality management is not the combination of management and hospitality but the existence of a hospitality management profession, and all this implies' (Brotherton, 1999, p. 171). This book acknowledges and agrees with his conclusion. That does not mean our book merely repeats what has already been said at length in the debate we summarised in the previous section. Our focus on the hospitality management profession means we address how to create successful hospitality experiences. That means we have to discuss the best ways of managing hospitality experiences in and beyond the hospitality industry context. Such a focus needs to take on board the lessons learnt in other fields and discussions, without losing track of the fact that, ultimately, a management perspective is the main reference point of this book.

Hospitality  
management

## 1.5 The remainder of this book

In line with our management perspective, the rest of this book focuses primarily on how to manage hospitality experiences in the commercial domain. However, this does not mean that our examples are limited to (one part of) the hospitality industry, or that the management principles and tools we discuss can only be applied in the commercial domain of the hospitality industry. The perspective we have chosen for interpreting and assessing

Commercial  
domain

hospitality focuses on the key elements involved in the profession of managing hospitality experiences. Ultimately, the particular context you, as a (future) hospitality manager, decide to pursue a career in will determine the rules and norms that apply to your day-to-day operations.

To conclude this first chapter, here is a brief overview of all remaining chapters and, especially, the links between them.

Chapter 2 (*Adding value to the hospitality experience*) focuses on a key question related to the management perspective. Now that we have defined hospitality experiences and discussed the various ways they can be interpreted and assessed, how can we use this knowledge to make a profit? Companies need to understand how staging hospitality experiences create added value for their customers and how this ties in with their overall value chain. Obviously, a key element is assessing what clients are willing to pay for and how much. The answers are clearly context dependent. For instance, the value chain of a snack bar is very different from the value chain of a luxury five-star resort, and the tangible and intangible aspects involved in staging hospitality experiences are quite different as well. Simultaneously, all of these aspects need to be linked to the costs and appropriate pricing of hospitality experiences offered to customers, because for most companies staging experiences, the objective is to make a profit. All of this highlights, once again, that in particular contexts, such as the commercial domain, hospitality experiences are linked to the exchange of money. A guest pays for experiencing hospitality the host offers. However, given the broad nature of hospitality experiences, this does not necessarily mean that only economic rules and norms apply. Consequently, companies need to account for this in the way they price, market and sell the hospitality experiences. They need to be aware of how all this affects important aspects such as customer loyalty and how they can apply methods such as revenue management.

The industry that evolved from exchanging money in return for hospitality experiences is the topic of Chapter 3 (*The hospitality industry*). Here we discuss the various types of companies that together shape this industry today, and show how the industry and its companies evolved over time. Some examples relate to independent versus chain hotels and the roles of various restaurants and other establishments that focus on the provision of food and drinks. However, we also address the position of other types of hospitality experience providers, such as theme parks, theatres, and so on. We highlight the key attributes of companies and establishments at the core of the industry, that is, hotels and restaurants. We explain their relation to (changing) customer segments and preferences and discuss various ways to rate and classify them. Finally, we establish that companies in today's hospitality industry depend highly on external parties and organisations for marketing and selling their products and services. We discuss the roles of the parties in the hospitality value chain and the implications for day-to-day operations in this industry.

Chapter 4 (*Hospitality beyond the industry's borders*) explicitly focuses on how hospitality experiences can and are applied in contexts outside the hospitality industry. Sometimes these experiences could constitute or be closely linked to the core product of companies that are not formally part of

1

this industry. For these companies, hospitality principles might not directly relate to their ultimate core product, but applying hospitality principles can help to create added value for customers and employees and establish competitive advantage. Here we show how staging hospitality experiences by applying the lessons learnt in the hospitality industry can help firms create a better functioning internal organisation, gain more satisfied customers and employees, and establish beneficial relationships with people and organisations in today's network-based society.

Then Chapter 5 (*The future of hospitality*) explores how current and future trends and developments might shape the hospitality industry in years to come. The topics include sustainable development and corporate social responsibility, political and economic developments, as well as the role of technology, social media and e-business in relation to the practices, principles and business models behind staging hospitality experiences. We pay special attention to generational differences and their effects on the ever-changing needs and wants of customers, and new ways of interacting with them. Finally, we highlight some first indications of what it all means for future hospitality managers and business. We demonstrate the importance of being able to scan, interpret and adapt to changing environments. Since this is a key competence of successful hospitality managers we elaborate on this last point in Chapter 9.

But before we get to the final part, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 address the daily operations related to managing hospitality experiences in more detail. Building on the reference points made in previous chapters, Chapter 6 (*Designing hospitality experiences*) focuses on how to design and create hospitality experiences that live up to the context-applicable rules and norms that will generate the added value we are aiming for. We further address key aspects such as satisfaction, loyalty, branding and expectations and how to account for these in setting up hospitality experiences. Applying 'touchpoint design', we explain how we can shape the supporting 'servicescape'.

A crucial part of any hospitality experience is the interaction between host and guest. This means that the behaviour of hospitality employees is key to staging experiences as they were designed to be staged. Chapter 7 (*Delivering hospitality*) focuses on what you need to guarantee that hospitality experiences are more than standard, friendly service. We explore various interactions between hosts and guests and answer questions like, What does a particular hospitality experience design imply for hospitality employees trying to stage the experience in a particular context? Related questions involve issues such as timing and location, and the associated organisational and managerial support needed to stage experiences. We then translate all of this into specific requirements with respect to employee training and support, including appropriate feedback and leadership.

All the above should make it clear that it takes careful planning and management to successfully execute hospitality experiences. Chapter 8 (*Quality management in hospitality*) explores three criteria that enable you to consistently stage successful hospitality experiences, providing the right quality at the right time, at the right cost. Here we discuss the processes and resources needed to meet those criteria and give examples of the

pitfalls you need to avoid. This automatically leads us back to the role of the hospitality manager. You must make sure that processes and resources are managed so that hospitality experiences add actual value for customers and contribute as planned to the value chain of your company.

Indeed, Chapter 9 (*Competencies and leadership*) focuses on the leadership skills hospitality managers should possess to fulfil their role in staging hospitality experiences, in and beyond the hospitality industry, now and in the future. What are the key management implications of what we discussed in the first eight chapters? And, crucially for any aspiring hospitality manager, what competencies do you need to master to be able to 'take the lead' in staging successful hospitality experiences?

Finally, Chapter 10 (*The intercultural dimension of the hospitality experience*) explains the concept of culture and its impact on hospitality experiences within an international context. It elaborates on the role of culture in three of the themes addressed earlier in this book: the design of hospitality experiences (Chapter 6), the delivery of hospitality experiences (Chapter 7), and the competencies required for both hospitality managers and staff to deliver successful hospitality experiences to guests from all over the world (Chapter 9).

# Summary

- ▶ Hospitality is:
  - a word that many people use often
  - a word that people interpret differently
  - a concept that refers to many different situations and experiences
  
- ▶ There are two main perspectives on the origins and history of hospitality:
  - as a behaviour
  - as an industry
  
- ▶ The hospitality industry consists of a wide variety of establishments and organisations.  
There is an on-going debate on how to define hospitality. We can distinguish two schools of thought:
  - some people think the meaning of hospitality is inextricably linked to human behaviour, regardless of its context
  - other people think that hospitality means managing hospitality products and services in the context of a commercial hospitality industry
  
- ▶ Hospitality relates to:
  - the provision of (a combination of) accommodation, food, drink
  - the interaction between a host and a guest
  
- ▶ The appropriate way to interpret and assess hospitality depends on the context. Lashley (2000) suggests these useful distinctions in contexts:
  - the social and cultural domain
  - the domestic or private domain
  - the commercial domain
  
- ▶ A hospitality experience is directly related to an interaction between a host and a guest, both of whom voluntarily engage in the interaction:
  - the host provides accommodation and/or food and/or drink to the guest
  - the context of the interaction determines the rules and norms of behaviour
  
- ▶ Interpreting and assessing hospitality experiences requires a multidisciplinary approach.
  
- ▶ Hospitality management is a profession that addresses how we can successfully create and manage hospitality experiences.

# Food for thought

---

This chapter introduced the concept of hospitality, highlighted the on-going debate on the meaning of hospitality for the hospitality industry and defined hospitality experiences. Based on the content of this chapter, the following questions, challenges and topics could serve as interesting starting points for further discussion:

- 1** In the hotel industry you will find very different types of hotels, ranging from budget hotels to deluxe five-star (or even seven or eight-star) hotels. Can you indicate the types of hospitality experiences that guests of these various hotels would expect and find acceptable for the price they have to pay for staying there?
  - 2** This chapter listed three domains that can serve as different contexts for defining and interpreting the norms and rules that apply to the hospitality concept. Can you set three rules and/or norms that only apply to one domain? And can you set three rules and/or norms that you could link to all three domains?
  - 3** We mentioned a prison that provides accommodation, food and drink to inmates. But this context does not qualify as hospitality. Can you come up with more contexts that incorporate the provision of accommodation, food and/or drink, yet do not qualify as hospitality?
  - 4** After reading this chapter, it should be clear to you that hospitality management requires a multidisciplinary approach. Can you list all the disciplines relevant to creating an optimal hospitality experience for guests from the moment they decide to book a stay at a big five-star deluxe hotel. Think of all the disciplines involved prior, during and after the guests' actual stay in the hotel. And how would you create the optimal hospitality experience for guests having dinner in a stylish, but not too expensive restaurant? Finally, what makes staging hospitality experiences different from simply providing a service?
-