
From the Center

Research and the Center for Hospitality Research

As you will find on our Web site (<http://TheCenterForHospitalityResearch.org>), the Center's mission is defined as follows:

to enable and conduct research of significance to the hospitality industry, while building important links between the academic and industry communities.

Our Web site defines our purpose to be the following:

the leading source for high quality, useable, and important research on and for the hospitality industry.

In this essay, I would like to elaborate on the differences between the research we conduct and your firm's proprietary research.

Research that hospitality firms conduct internally is similar in many regards to the research that hospitality



firms outsource (e.g., to consulting firms). First, both types of research typically are targeted at company-specific business issues. For example, a firm might be interested in using research to evaluate the cost of a customer-loyalty program or to determine how well its services compare to those of a competitor. Second, both types of research are motivated by the desire to find the "answer" quickly. In today's world, where performance is judged quarter to quarter, there are strong pressures to find quick answers. Third, both types of research typically address well-defined or well-structured problems. By this, I mean that they are often focused on problems with narrowly defined scopes.

In contrast, the research we foster at the Center for Hospitality Research (CHR), whether it appears in the *Cornell Quarterly* or in a CHR report, can differ on all these dimensions from internal or outsourced research. First, our research often examines industry-wide issues. For example, the CHR report on "Hotel

Managers' Perceptions of the Blackout of '03," written by Rob Kwortnik, spans the industry in terms of both geography and market segments. Second, our research is often motivated by the desire for answers to fundamental questions. As an example of this, see the CHR report on "Restaurant Revenue Management," written by Sherri Kimes. This detailed and useful analysis blossomed from the simple question, "How can a restaurant make more money?" Third, our research often deals with ill-defined, messy problems. As an example of this, see my CHR report on "Workforce Scheduling, A Guide for the Hospitality Industry." Essential though it is, scheduling can be snarled by a host of factors.

Both types of research are essential to your success. In today's ever-changing business world, astute managers need to draw information from a variety of sources. The research conducted by the CHR, because it *is* different, can complement focused, proprietary research. Our research can provide insights that the in-

house and outsourced research just cannot provide.

As you see in our mission statement above, the CHR is designed to be interactive with the hospitality industry. The CHR depends on corporate participation to further its mission. That participation is intended to be both financial and conceptual. As of early April 2004 (when I am writing this), the CHR has nine corporate supporters at the level of sponsor and higher, and twenty-four corporate supporters at the friends level. Take a look at the list and you will see an international list of forward-looking firms, which are participating in the Center's programs. If you take a moment to visit our Web site, I am sure that you will agree that what we are doing is of value to the hospitality industry. I encourage you to get involved as a CHR supporter. This will put your firm squarely in the middle of the CHR's information stream. You can find details on our corporate relations programs on our Web site—*G.M.T.*