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From Service to Experience: Understanding and Defining the Hospitality Business

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Abstract

Failure adequately to define or understand hospitality as a commercial phenomenon has created a fragmented academic environment and a schizophrenia in the industry that has the potential to limit its development as a global industry. This article suggests that, by redefining hospitality as behaviour and experience, a new perspective emerges that has exciting implications for the management of hospitality businesses. A framework to describe hospitality in the commercial domain is proposed. This framework suggests a focus on the host–guest relationship, generosity, theatre and performance, ‘lots of little surprises’, and the security of strangers – a focus that provides guests with experiences that are personal, memorable and add value to their lives.

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