

International Dictionary of Hospitality Management

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PUBLICATIONS IN REVIEW
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When reviewing a dictionary, the definition of a dictionary as presented by Ambrose Bierce in his *Devil's Dictionary*, first published in 1881, springs to mind. Bierce defines a dictionary as: “a malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic”, adding the caveat that his own dictionary, however, “is a most useful work”.

To the best of the reviewer's knowledge, the *International Dictionary of Hospitality Management* is the first ever dictionary entirely devoted to the area of Hospitality Management. It is a long-awaited, abridged and generally more affordable version of *The International Encyclopaedia of Hospitality Management* (Pizam 2005). In a relatively short space of time this dictionary will undoubtedly prove to be the ideal companion for all students and practitioners studying and working the hospitality industry, not least because of price and size but also due to the user friendly layout. This redacted version is an excellent companion volume to the *Encyclopaedia* and should encourage those students who wish to know more to go to the library and explore the *Encyclopaedia*.

The editors have taken the definitions that the 216 original authors provided for the *Encyclopaedia* and redacted them to entries averaging 150 words. Considering that the *Dictionary* covers the same 734 topics ranging from *à la carte* to zoning codes, this is a considerable editorial achievement. It provides succinct and clear definitions of topics as diverse as entrepreneurship, liquidity ratios, psychological contracts and yield management – some of which this reviewer had not previously understood fully! The *Dictionary* defines a wide range of relevant issues in the field of hospitality management, from both a sector level: Lodging; Restaurants and Food service; Time-share; Clubs, and Events, as well as a managerial one: Accounting and Finance; Marketing; Strategic Management; Human Resources; Information Technology; and Facilities Management.

When reviewing a work such as this, there is always the temptation to look for missing entries and arguably some do exist; for example, hospitality, management or even hospitality management. However, considering the recent debate surrounding a definition of hospitality (summarized by Morrison and O’Gorman, 2008), leaving it out would seem to have been a sensible editorial decision. The editors themselves openly state that the *Dictionary* is not designed to be all-encompassing and capture every aspect of the international hospitality industry. However it does, through its entries and list of authors, reflect the global and cross-cultural nature of the industry.

That said, Bierce’s humorous warning should not be completely ignored. There is always the danger that definitions can become ‘hard and inelastic’. Therefore it could be argued that a useful and exciting development, and the likely next step, would be an on-line version of the *Dictionary*. A user developed, annotated, edited, and on-line version of the dictionary would accommodate the dynamics of terminology used within the field of hospitality management. This would also allow for the incorporation of the contestation, disputation and refinement of terms with an immediacy that is hard to realize in print.

Unarguably, like Bierce’s dictionary, the *International Dictionary of Hospitality Management* is indeed a “most useful work” not least because it is affordable, relevant, practical and accessible both to students of and professionals working within the International Hospitality Industry. This dictionary is unlikely to become a ‘malevolent literary device’ that would cramp the growth and development of a field of study, it is more likely to contribute to the professional and standardized of the language used by all those involved with hospitality management.

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