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COMMENTS & REJOINDERS

## Finding the Hospitality Industry (Slattery's reply to Brotherton)

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I will make three points about Brotherton's (2002) response to my article, Finding the Hospitality Industry (Slattery, 2002).

First, I noted the revelation by Brotherton that, after publication and review of *In Search of Hospitality*, he has 'reservations about the three-domain model...particularly regarding the inclusion of the social domain'. I was surprised at his suggestion that, 'the extent to which other contributors, or wider constituencies, support this model is ... highly variable' and I was startled that, 'the assumption that there is anything approaching a three domain school of thought ...subscribed to by many of the contributors is erroneous' (2002:1).

The dominant feature of the book is the three domains of hospitality; the social, the private and the commercial. It is proposed by the editors in the introduction. Its rationale is the subject of the first chapter written by the senior editor and all chapters except the last one fall into at least one of the three domains. In the book, I read attempts by some authors to argue for the dominance of their favourite domain, while others confine their analysis to their own domain, but I read no dissent from the contributing authors in the book about the logic or validity of the three-domain approach itself. Thus, a reader can only assume that the contributing academics accepted the three-domain approach. My views on the content and implications of the three-domain approach are based on what appears between the covers of the book and from previous publications on the topic by Lashley (2000) and Brotherton (1999). The new Brotherton revelations reduce the credibility of the book below my previous assessment.

Secondly, the concept of hospitality promoted by Brotherton and Wood (2000) is centred on one feature; the exchange process that occurs within hospitality venues, and they link both private and commercial hospitality in their definition. This approach constrains them to a venue-only focus since the private domain has no corporate or industry-wide levels. It entails a totally fragmented business. In reality, the dominant development in the structure of the hospitality business is consolidation. There is nothing in their concept of hospitality that allows for the analysis or interpretation of events, challenges or structures in hospitality chains, or in the industry as a whole. A concept of hospitality

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and hospitality management that excludes the main developments in the industry, as I have already argued, is not good enough as a basis for teaching and research in the field.

Thirdly, Brotherton's defence of his approach that, 'it is the quality of this [the exchange that takes place in the provision / consumption of hospitality] that ultimately drives customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability and performance' (2002:3), is also problematic. The relationship is not causal. There is substantial empirical evidence that quality is not the determinant of customer satisfaction, loyalty, profitability or performance (BDRC, 1985-2002; Hofmeyer, 1989). These concepts are complex and Brotherton's assertion illustrates that his understanding of them within the hospitality business is both conceptually naïve and empirically restricted, just like his concept of hospitality.

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