



## “Green credentials will become more important and packaging will be minimised”

high street, at their place of work.

Therefore, within B&I, food in staff restaurants will have to be as good as, or exceed, the high street. There will be continuing pressure on time spent at lunch so there will be an ever-increasing need for grab-and-go. In tandem with that, I expect a resurgence in the importance of the food quality offered in the workplace by business leaders as it will be a key part of the recruitment and retention mix for big employers.

In fine-dining, I see a gentle move away from the traditional cuisine to embrace a growing emphasis on high quality ethnic food. At one of our sites in the City for instance, we have recently introduced a wok-station to allow for high-end delivery of fresh oriental cooking to the table.

In every walk of life, we have seen the growth of brands to the extent where people are prepared to queue all night to buy an Anya Hindmarch shopping bag for £5. The brand says something about you, your status and your aspirations.

What I do very firmly believe is that we will see a growth in the importance of corporate brands within the foodservice arena. Companies with strong corporate identities and solid reputations will be the winners, those without, the losers.



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## Environment: top of the agenda

### PHILIPPE ROSSITER

Ten years ago the dictionary definition of ‘environment’ presented a relatively bland description of spatial positioning. Today, the word has assumed a far more emotive meaning and it’s used as a ‘catch all’ for a variety of distinct aspects such as climate change, pollution, sustainable tourism, food procurement, waste management and energy resources. Above all, concerns about the environment have now moved from what used to be seen as the ‘green fringe’ into the mainstream consciousness of society.

Such concerns have, inevitably, brought a spotlight to bear on our industry, for it is both customer and provider of the environment. As Paul Dubrulle, co-founder of Accor, has said: “the environment is the raw material of the tourism industry”. Of course, he was referring to the natural environment in which tourist destinations have developed, but one could easily argue that we, in the industry, create our own physical environments to attract and retain our customers. In this context, five star Park Lane luxury or the country house hotel complete with spa and golf course, have built their customer offer on the basis of the environment they provide, supported by excellent service.

The big question is how will we be able to manage our environmental impact as demand grows against a backdrop of increasing vulnerability? In this context, the UK’s climate is predicted to become warmer, with longer, hotter summers. This will increase the pressure on tourism from both inbound and native customers. Whilst seemingly good for the industry such raised demand can threaten the very features of a locality that attracted visitors in the first place. A combination of



drought, flash flooding and forest fires will work against our efforts to provide an attractive backdrop to our tourism offer, unless we deploy and use substantial resources to combat these threats.

There are also the indirect effects of increased tourism such as higher levels of pollution, congestion and overcrowding. As society becomes more conditioned to its environmental impact, and terms such as 'carbon footprint' become more widely used and understood, our industry will be subjected to even greater levels of scrutiny to ensure that we are acting in an environmentally sound fashion.

It may be true that, according to recent research on sustainable tourism by VisitBritain, some people take the view that "you can't go on holiday just to sustain the environment; you might as well stay at home!". Nevertheless, its Tripadvisor Survey also revealed that 40% of people already take environmentally-friendly tourism into consideration when making travel plans, whilst 60% believe environment-friendly measures in travel are making a difference.

It looks, therefore, as if customer-demand, if no other more altruistic force, will oblige us to ensure we become increasingly aware of the need to mitigate the industry's environmental impact. We may not be able to tackle climate change on our own, but we are able to pursue sound policies on waste management, recycling, energy efficiency and water conservation. At a time when Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an integral aspect of business strategy in many areas of the economy, no sector of our industry is immune from the same drivers of this philosophy. We are, however, better placed than many by being able to demonstrate our commitment to CSR through the adoption of visible environmentally-conscious modes of operation.

Our customers will love us for it, but, more importantly, so will the planet.



*Mark Norris is chief executive of Profile, a well established recruitment firm with offices in London, Paris, New York and Shanghai. In the last, 20 years, Profile has recruited over 4,000 senior managers for the hospitality industry worldwide*

## Recruiting: the next generation

### MARK NORRIS

I passionately believe that there is huge opportunity in the hospitality industry in the next 10 years and beyond, and that in the course of time our industry will really become a first choice career and an even greater business to be in.

I also predict that there will be an increasing choice of job opportunities available, as developments in leisure and gaming become even more exciting, where the quality and scope of jobs will improve dramatically, as will pay and conditions.

First of all, however, we ought to consider how the hospitality industry is defined as it's such a broad term. Try typing into Google 'definition of hospitality' and you get a reference to a "cordial and generous reception of, or disposition towards guests". However, in the Oxford English Dictionary, there is rather a contrast; when it comes to defining the new term McJob – as in a job like working for McDonald's – it says it is an "unstimulating, low-paid job with few prospects".

Hopefully the OED image is one we can shed and there is assurance of this from a recent study describing hospitality as the world's fastest-growing, job-creating profession, employing one in 10 people worldwide. In the UK alone, the industry employs over 1.8 million people and it's estimated that the industry will require 30,000-35,000 trained people at management and supervisory level year-on-year until 2010 in order to meet basic demand.

I can see enormous scope for those who want to pursue a career in the industry, plus a huge range of employment prospects across a variety of other areas too; for example the ever-growing financial services industry is increasingly looking at our sector as a source of talented employees to run the client-facing side of their businesses. Add the world of sport and everything associated with events such as the 2012 Olympics and other sporting extravaganzas still at the planning stage and the future opportunities appear limitless. The worry though, is that right now it appears that there are too few students taking college and university courses in hospitality to sustain this requirement.

So where do we go from here? I'm not sure I could put this better than Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts does in setting out its vision for employee opportunities on its website: "At Four Seasons, we place a great deal of importance on assembling the best team possible. We hire motivated people, train them to perform their jobs superbly and create a working environment where they can flourish – guided by passionately held goals, beliefs and principles. Four Seasons can offer what many hospitality professionals dream of – an opportunity to build a lifelong career that has both global potential and a real sense of pride in work well done."

It's no surprise that this is such a successful company, but as a rule I'm not sure we are always so good at getting that message out there!

We need to be more upbeat about our history and flag up our tremendous achievements over the last decade. Just look at the recent *Sunday Times* Rich List to see

