

The journal's main objective is to facilitate dialogue between industry and academia, to fully explore industry challenges and via a collaborative approach, develop practical and implementable solutions. All our theme editors embrace this expectation with skill and enthusiasm – none more so than Chandana (Chandi) Jayawardena and it is a pleasure to welcome back Chandi who, together with his co-theme editors, re-visits and extends their analysis of the challenges facing Canada's hospitality and tourism industry. I should like to thank Chandi, Paul, Altaf, Alanna and their team of contributors for their broad-ranging and authoritative analysis and for compiling a detailed set of conclusions.

Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT) aims to make a practical and theoretical contribution to hospitality and tourism development and we seek to do this by using a key question to focus attention on an industry issue. If you would like to contribute to our work by serving as a *WHATT* theme editor, please contact me.

Richard Teare
Managing Editor, WHATT

The hospitality and tourism industry in Canada: what are the main challenges and solutions?

Introduction

This theme issue is dedicated to Canada. The foundation for this theme issue was laid during two annual Educators' Forums of Heads of Hospitality and Tourism Ontario (HOHTO). HOHTO is a provincial body of all the deans and academic chairs responsible for tourism, hospitality and culinary arts programs in 24 community colleges funded by the province of Ontario, Canada. HOHTO is an influential body and is responsible for a student population of approximately 14,000.

The recent annual Educators' Forums of HOHTO were hosted by Algonquin College, Ottawa, in 2015 and George Brown College, Toronto, in 2016. Most authors of articles for this theme issue were presenters at these two forums.

Canadian hospitality and tourism educators and their counterparts in the industry have collaborated periodically to discuss the challenges they face and to find practical solutions. As in many regions of the world, *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes (WHATT)* has played a key role in facilitating such scholarly activities in Canada. At a *WHATT* roundtable held in Canada five years ago, hosted by HOHTO, participants from industry and academia looked to the future of Canada's hospitality and tourism industry. Among the concluding remarks of the resulting publication (*WHATT*, volume 5, number 2, 2013) were three key suggestions:

- *Marketing*: The Canadian Government should double their federal budget for marketing Canada as a tourist destination.
- *Sustainability*: Industry leaders should take a holistic approach to sustainability and be proactive in adopting sustainable designs, practices and innovative initiatives.
- *Human resources*: Industry leaders should shift from a "service" culture to an "entertainment" culture while taking a proactive approach to diversity in terms of recruitment, retention and development of human capital.

This 2017 *WHATT* theme issue dedicated to Canada builds on these ideas by analyzing current challenges and recommending innovative and practical solutions for the future.



We sincerely hope that the thought-provoking articles in this theme issue will be read, enjoyed and used by hospitality and tourism industry leaders, consultants, researchers, academics and students.

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About the Theme Editors

Dr Chandana (Chandi) Jayawardena is President of Chandi J. Associates Consulting, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada. He has held leadership positions in South Asia, the Middle East, Europe, South America, the Caribbean and North America. In Canada, he was a Visiting Professor at Ryerson University, Professor at Niagara College, Associate Dean at George Brown College and Senior Vice President at the Canadian School of Management. He has co-authored or edited/co-edited 19 books and journal theme issues and authored over 100 articles. He has presented at conferences in 38 countries. He has led or participated in consulting projects for over 40 organizations, including: the European Union, USAID, the Caribbean Tourism Organization, the Amazon Corporate Treaty Organization, the Government of Guyana, the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, the Jamaica Hotel & Tourist Association, the Barbados Hotel & Tourism Association, Sandals International, Rocco Forte Hotels, and in Canada, for Algonquin College, Centennial College and Red River College. He is a former President of the world's largest professional body in the hospitality industry – Hotel & Catering International Management Association (HCIMA), now the Institute of Hospitality, UK.

Dr Paul A. Willie is Professor at Niagara College, Ontario, Canada. His areas of expertise include accounting, finance, hotel management, revenue management, international business and strategy. At the age of 15, he started his hotel career at the historic Fairmont Hotel Macdonald, Edmonton, Alberta. Dr Willie has provided his professional services to governments and corporations in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, The Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Florida and Guyana. He served Her Majesty, The Queen, during the 1978 Commonwealth Games, as well as the late Premier of Alberta, Peter Lougheed, at various government functions. Dr Willie holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Hotel and Food Administration, an MBA in Hospitality Management and a Doctorate in International Business. Complementing his university degrees, Dr Willie also holds eight professional certifications. He currently serves as President for the Ontario Chapter of the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals association which has about 5,000 members worldwide. He has authored and co-authored numerous journal articles and text books and has served on a variety of tourism-related boards.

Altaf Sovani is the Academic Chair in the School of Hospitality and Tourism of Algonquin College. He holds an MBA and is currently working toward his DBA. His career spans both the private and academic sectors. He possesses over 25 years of experience which includes academic leadership in post-secondary institutions, the role of Past Chair of HOHTO where he worked with leaders of academic organizations from 24 Ontario colleges and universities and entrepreneurial positions in the hospitality industry. Altaf led the development of five new programs including the first Bachelors of Hospitality and Tourism Degree Program in Eastern Ontario. Altaf has a passion for learning and creating learning environments for students and faculty such that the School of Hospitality & Tourism, its programs and graduates are best in class and contributors to the growth of the industry. Altaf continues to give his time and knowledge through volunteering and serving on boards and committees. He is a recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his exemplary work in the field of education.

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Alanna MacDonald is Professor of Communications in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at Algonquin College in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. Alanna holds a Master of Education, specializing in Distance Education, which has prepared her to support the design and delivery of learning using strategies that suit the changing needs of students in an increasingly connected world. Her professional experience is in the field of education, and she has been teaching at the post-secondary level for seven years. Teaching the universally essential skills needed for communication allows Alanna to explore various industries as she tailors her courses to meet the needs of students entering a variety of professional hospitality and tourism sectors. Identifying the communication strategies most commonly used in the field allows Alanna to effectively reach students and design courses and curricula that will prepare students for success in their careers.