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Boston University School of Hospitality Administration

Winter 2014



ON THE FRONT LINE

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Meet the New Dean of SHA

DEAN ARUN UPNEJA ON STAR TREK, BREAKNECK BANQUETING, THE FUTURE OF HOSPITALITY, AND HIS PLANS FOR SHA ALUMS

BY LARA EHRLICH

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DEAN ARUN UPNEJA COMES TO BOSTON UNIVERSITY FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, where he was a professor of hospitality financial management and associate dean for academic affairs in the Schreyer Honors College.

During his 17 years at Penn State, Dean Upneja developed new honors programs and received numerous awards for his research, including the John Wiley & Sons Lifetime Research Achievement Award. He earned his BA in Economics and Business Administration from the University of Jammu in India, and a BS in Hotel and Restaurant Management, an MBA, and a PhD in Accounting, all from the University of Houston. Now that you know the basics, meet the new captain of BU's School of Hospitality Administration:

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

After I finished my bachelor's degree in economics when I was 19, I came across an advertisement for management training at the Taj Mahal Hotel Mumbai. They wanted to give non-hospitality graduates two years of management training, and I was part of the first batch that they hired in 1982. They had a comprehensive training

plan with classroom and on-the-job instruction in every facet of the industry.

WHAT DID YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT YOUR EARLY WORK IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY?

One of my favorite assignments was working in banquets. Taj Mumbai has 11 halls of different sizes, and they have events from morning until night, ranging from groups of 50 to 500. On one particular day, I was in charge of the biggest hall where there was a breakfast event that went for a couple of hours, and then we had 60 minutes to totally break down the room and reset it for a lunch event. The lunch went on for 3 hours, and then we had 60 minutes to break it down for a press conference, and then we had another 60 minutes to set up for a formal dinner. It's an exciting lifestyle, and very dynamic.

WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR 17-YEAR CAREER AT PENN STATE?

Penn State has a management-oriented program, similar to SHA, and a lot of students were interested in culinary aspects, so I created a two-week culinary program in Lyon, France. I also created a one-week program in Italy,

which was so successful that I developed a similar program in Greece, as well as a student exchange program with the Chinese University of Hong Kong. For the last few years, I was working as the associate dean of the honors college, and there again, I was able to create many programs that the students have really enjoyed. I'm in education because I love to educate students for the industry, and it gives me a lot of satisfaction to create opportunities for students to excel.

WHAT ARE YOUR THREE TOP GOALS FOR SHA?

The hospitality industry loves SHA. The hotel and restaurant companies have a very high regard for BU, our program, the faculty, and especially the students. So, first, I have to make sure that SHA's relationship with the industry continues at that high level and that we expand our interactions. I am scheduling meetings with general managers of all the major hotels in Boston and meeting with our industry advisory board members. I want to deepen the School's engagement with the industry, and I'm going to be working very hard to make sure that the industry considers SHA the absolute best program among all other hospitality programs. ➔

CONOR DOHERTY

» Second, we attract some of the best students in the country who go into the hospitality sector, so I want to make sure that they are sufficiently challenged. The industry is becoming much more complicated, with increasing use of technology, and so you need graduates who have the intellectual vigor to handle this complicated technology in a very complex world. I'm going to be taking a detailed look at the curriculum, working with industry leaders to make sure that we are giving students the best education we can so that they are well positioned to meet the needs of the industry in the future.

Third, even though Boston University is one of the premier universities in the country, in SHA we have not had a lot of traditional research, so I want to have faculty and students doing research published in academic journals. We will interact with other academic units so that we are much more integrated into the University, as well as becoming part of BU's research enterprise.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR CONNECTING MORE DEEPLY WITH SHA ALUMS?

The first thing we need to do is know who the alumni are, so we have already started compiling an accurate list of every single person who graduated from SHA, even when it was part of BU's Metropolitan College. I intend to make sure that all alumni are kept up-to-date on what is happening at SHA.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF WORK?

When you have work, two active boys, and a wife who runs her own business, life can get pretty complicated—but I like to hang out with my family, read, and keep up with current events, and I really enjoy traveling. In recent times, TV has been a luxury, but one of my favorite shows is *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. My youngest son watches with me occasionally, but I think he kind of enjoys *Star Trek* because his dad enjoys it.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL SHA ALUMS?

I already have strong feelings about SHA, and I think it has a huge amount of potential. I want everyone to know that I am very excited to be here, and they will be hearing from me. ☑

MARRIOTT FOUNDATION GIVES \$1 MILLION TO SHA

THE J. WILLARD AND ALICE S. MARRIOTT

Foundation has awarded a grant of \$1 million to the School of Hospitality Administration, which will help create a career services center to prepare students for the hospitality industry. The new Marriott Career Center will house a media library for career-related research that will enable students to explore the industry. Faculty will be able to conduct seminars for groups of students, and hospitality industry professionals will be invited to speak with students about career paths and to interview graduating students.

"Boston University is not only committed to providing its SHA students with an excellent education, it is committed to providing students with excellent career opportunities," says Anne Gunsteens, the foundation's executive director. "That commitment to student success beyond the walls of the classroom is very aligned with the foundation's mission."

—BY JEFFREY L. CRUIKSHANK

Welcome Aboard!



JIM KAUFFMAN, president of US and Canada Full Service Hotels, The Americas, Marriott International, Inc., has joined the SHA Advisory Board. Since starting with Marriott International in 1977, he has held management positions throughout the country, from California to New Jersey, Texas to Washington, DC.

Welcome Aboard!



COURTNEY RAEISINAFCHI was inspired to study architecture by a miniature chair collection that belonged to her father, a residential interior designer. She couldn't figure out why anyone would want to make tiny chairs—"until I learned that each one was a model of an iconic real-life chair that had been designed by a famous architect and was representative of an entire design era," she says. "So, from an early age, I knew about movements in architecture and about all of the legendary architects."

An instructor of hospitality administration, Raeisinafchi went on to earn a bachelor's degree from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a master's in hospitality administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas-Singapore. She is currently completing a master's in architecture and a PhD from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she was an adjunct instructor. She describes herself as "an educator who has developed very much in the spirit of innovation. I strongly believe that some of the most innovative education for future hospitality is interdisciplinary, requiring atypical architectural research and methods in design and development."

In Fall 2013, Raeisinafchi taught *Lodging Operations and Technology and Hospitality Facilities Design*. Her design students created a proposal for the redevelopment of a historic hotel in a medieval town outside of Bologna, Italy, that was razed by an earthquake in 2012. "By focusing on this destroyed space," she says, "students learned how to use brand-new concepts that blend a historic environment with contemporary hospitality." —LE

LEFT: JIM KAUFFMAN; RIGHT: COURTNEY RAEISINAFCHI

COURTESY OF CAESARS ENTERTAINMENT

Selling the "Bright Light City"

A guaranteed winner in the gambling capital

BY ANDREW THURSTON

THE OFFICIAL STAR TREK CONVENTION.

The International Swizzle Stick Collectors Association Convention. The Consumer Electronics Association. The National Ready Mixed Concrete Association Convention. No matter the gathering, Las Vegas has probably hosted it. The shimmering strip in the heart of the Nevada desert might be the only place in the world where Trekkies, small stick fans, and aggregate salespeople share a table—a blackjack table, that is.

Las Vegas has close to 11 million square feet of meeting and convention space. Around 10 percent of that space belongs to Caesars Entertainment, and it's Leigh Libero's job to fill it. Libero ('99), in-market national sales manager for Caesars, helps the gaming and resort group host everything from a 20-person board meeting to the blockbuster CinemaCon, where 5,000 of the world's theater owners get sneak previews of the summer's biggest hits.

Vegas might be known for gambling, but Libero says conventions are that rare thing on the strip—a sure-fire winner: "In one night, a casino can win \$30 million or it can lose \$30 million." But whatever happens on the tables, Caesars has "contracted, guaranteed revenue coming in from the convention business."

In 1970, there were 296 conventions in Vegas, pulling in a total of 269,129 attendees. In 2012, those numbers hit 21,615 and 4,944,014, respectively; more than 12 percent of total visitors were in town for a convention.

Though Libero admits that a few years ago, many in her field were concerned that teleconferencing and web meetings could burst the bubble, "There is nothing that can replace meeting someone face-to-face," she says. "Relationships and personal interaction are important and always will be." A lot of business



Forum Ballroom at Caesars Palace can be divided into 25 rooms and holds up to 5,500 people.



A sales dinner in the Milano Ballroom at Caesars Palace



"THE BUSINESS WILL GET DONE DURING THE DAY AND THE FUN WILL BE HAD AT NIGHT."

gets done in person in Vegas, says Libero—despite the city's reputation for partying.

"There are companies that always say, 'We're really concerned about losing people from our meeting to the casino,' but as long as you aren't running these people from 7 a.m. to midnight in a meeting, the business will get done during the day and the fun will be had at night."

Libero has promoted meeting space in Vegas for more than a decade, starting at the Sands-owned Venetian and Palazzo resorts, and says that despite the "new bright, shiny pennies that keep popping up" on the strip, the fundamentals of the business haven't changed. "One of our senior vice president's favorite lines is that it's all bricks and mortar when you break it down, every building; you can change up the theme a little bit or do something new, but ultimately, what you're selling is all the same. It's that intangible, the service level, that really sets us apart."

Whether you're competing to host a convention for the \$35-billion-grossing box office business or the annual get-together for the "original" Swizzle Stick Collectors Club (there's more than one?), it's not enough just to offer the right room at the right price—you have to "go that extra mile to give that personal touch" on the service side. ☑

ON THE FRONT LINE

WHEN RACE DAY BECAME A NIGHTMARE, BOSTON HOTELS BECAME SECOND RESPONDERS.

BY LARA EHRLICH

Tim Davey, his wife Lisa, and their three children drove 600 miles from Richmond, Virginia, for the 2013 Boston Marathon. They spent Sunday night at a hotel 20 miles outside the city and took the train downtown the following morning. Tim crossed the finish line at 1:30 p.m., and when he sat down to rest, he couldn't get back up.

Volunteers helped the family into the medical tent, and just as a doctor knelt to examine Tim's knee, an explosion ripped through Boylston Street. A second blast followed, and blood-soaked runners and spectators began to stagger into the tent. The Daveys tried to move out of the way, but Tim couldn't walk. A volunteer helped lift him into a wheelchair, and Lisa unzipped the side of the tent, ushering her family into the chaotic street. Her children were screaming, Tim had slipped into shock, and their car was parked at their hotel 20 miles away. "I had no plan," Lisa says. "There were policemen, rescue workers, people running, sirens going off, and I realized I wasn't going to get very far. Right across the street was the Fairmont Copley Plaza."

As the news broke that two bombs had exploded on Boylston Street, and runners and spectators flooded nearby hotels for shelter, hospitality employees set aside their own fears to manage the terrified crowd. Police officers ▶▶

PAINTING: "THE FINISH LINE" REPRODUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL WATERCOLOR BY THOMAS REBEK. WWW.THOMASREBEK.COM

were taking up posts in front of hotel entrances, including the Copley, where Paul Tormey, regional vice president and general manager, was driving the hotel's emergency plan into action. "Everyone's got a friend, a cell phone, Twitter, Facebook, and everyone's asking what happened," says Tormey, a Boston University School of Hospitality Administration Advisory Board member. "That got a lot of our managers and colleagues distracted—but they had a job to do."

When the Daveys entered the Copley's elegant lobby, they were "immediately greeted by hotel staff who asked us what they could do to help," Lisa says. They brought ice for Tim's knee, provided the children with snacks and drinks, and charged Lisa's cell phone. Meanwhile, Boylston Street was under lockdown and the downtown area was designated a crime scene. The trains were stopped, there were no cabs, and the Daveys were stranded.

Although the hotel was fully booked, the front desk staff secured a room for the Daveys. "They didn't look at us as a family who obviously wouldn't have been able to afford a stay in their hotel, even on a splurge vacation," Lisa says. "They looked at us as individuals who needed help, and they treated us just like their guests staying in the penthouses. The Copley kept my family safe. I don't know what would have happened if we had walked out the other side of the tent."

TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE

What the Daveys didn't know is that during this extraordinary situation, the staff was carrying out an emergency plan decades in the making. The Copley has served as the headquarter hotel for the Boston Marathon for more than 20 years, accommodating the press and elite runners, hosting the weekend ceremonies, and serving as the command center from which officials monitor the race. "It's the nerve center of the Marathon. It's our Super Bowl every year, our Final Four," says Tormey. When the runners leave for the Marathon in the morning, the hotel transitions into what they call "soft lockdown"; no one is allowed into the hotel without the proper credentials.

While the Copley increases security on Marathon Monday, it is prepared for emergencies 365 days a year. "We have a protocol for everything from blackouts, to blizzards, to bombings, to terrorist attacks, to in-house civil disruptions," says Tormey. "Everyone's got a place to go, a command center, and a communications protocol. We have everything from good old three-ring binders to an email file where you look up what you're supposed to do." The plan includes an internal communication system encompassing the hotel owners, stakeholders, insurance company, and service advisors. External communication is equally critical; the on-site social media manager collaborates with public relations and sales and marketing to relay critical information to the guests and the public. Meanwhile, hotel security locks down the cameras and recording equipment for authorities. Each member of the staff performs a predetermined role. "I can't overstate the importance of making sure you have the right people and that they listen," Tormey says. "During an emergency, there's no time for debate."



"LIKE THE POLICE, WE HAVE ABSOLUTE FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT AND TO SERVE."

—JEFFREY SAUNDERS



After the Marathon bombings, Boylston Street was under lockdown, and police guarded the Copley's every entrance.

Tormey's fellow SHA Advisory Board member Jeffrey Saunders underscores the importance of empowering team leaders to take action during an emergency situation. As the president and CEO of Saunders Hotel Group, which includes the Lenox Hotel Boston, Saunders considers "every manager to be a director of security, in a sense. They're all trained to look out for certain things and to communicate with the rest of the team on anything out of the ordinary. Like the police, we have absolute fiduciary responsibility to protect and to serve."

This responsibility extends to guests' psychological needs as well, says SHA Advisory Board member Bill Taylor, regional vice president and general manager of the Four Seasons Hotel Boston. During the citywide shelter-in-place on April 19 as the FBI hunted bombings suspects Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, Taylor sent a personal note to the guest rooms every two hours. "We color-coded the letters so the guests knew when they were receiving a new update. We also made a point to check in with guests in person. They needed an opportunity to express their concerns and their appreciation; they wanted to be able to talk to somebody about their emotions."

"We're here to take care of people's needs and listen with empathy," adds Robert Daugherty, SHA adjunct professor and executive chef of the Hyatt Regency Cambridge, whose staff made sure to meet the stricken runners and their families as they returned from the Mara-

thon. "It is important to take care of your customers' human needs, to provide comfort, shelter, and safety."

THE SECOND RESPONDERS

In the aftermath of the bombings, the Lenox served and protected guests more accustomed to serving and protecting others. Situated on the corner of Boylston and Exeter Streets, the hotel was caught between the two explosions. Within 15 minutes of the bombings, the police had evacuated all 214 of the Lenox's rooms and established the hotel as the city's emergency command center. The FBI; Secret Service; police officers; state troopers; Homeland Security; and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives commandeered the guest rooms. "It was the first time in 113 years that we didn't have a single guest in our hotel," says Daniel Donahue, the hotel's vice president and managing director.

When the staff was allowed to return to the building the following morning, they got to work taking care of their unexpected guests. "It was really a knee-jerk reaction," Donahue says. "I looked at our food and beverage director and said, 'We need to feed these people.'" He expected to feed them for one day—and ended up feeding them for eight.

The Lenox hosted Boston's first responders from the afternoon of the bombings on April 15 to Tuesday, April 23. The stylish City Table restaurant transformed into a cafeteria where the hotel staff served more than 1,500 meals each day; during a single breakfast, the officers consumed more than 1,000 eggs and 1,700 strips of bacon. Situated near the center of the 12-block, heavily secured crime scene, the Lenox was unable to receive deliveries, and began to run low on food in less than a day.

"When I heard that the Lenox was taking care of the first responders, I reached out to Dan to see what we could do," says Taylor, whose

hotel the Four Seasons, along with Eastern Standard Kitchen, Island Creek Oyster Bar, Stella, Smith & Wollensky, the Colonnade Boston Hotel, and many other neighboring businesses, donated provisions and offered moral support. The Copley had just received a food shipment, and Tormey and his cook carried 40 pounds of bacon down Exeter Street, where they were stopped by a SWAT team who asked where they were going. "I said we were coming from the Copley with bacon for their breakfast," says Tormey. "They put their rifles aside and led us into the Lenox."

Not all of the donations came from outside the Lenox's walls. More than 70 Lenox employees volunteered around the clock, preparing meals and cleaning rooms, and when the officers and agents began leaving cash on the tables in compensation, the hotel staff donated the money to The One Fund in support of the bombings victims. Between their tips and donations derived from the 3,000 Boston Strong T-shirts the hotel commissioned, the Lenox staff donated nearly \$15,000 to The One Fund.

As the victims of the bombings strive to heal, the Boylston Street businesses affected by the tragedy are undergoing their own recovery. "Just because the bombs are gone doesn't mean the damage is gone," says Michael Oshins (SED'02), associate professor of the practice at SHA. "Your sales are down; revenue is down. If revenue is down, more people are going to lose their jobs. What are you going to do to bring back the business and keep your staff employed? It's important to have a discussion on post-traumatic stress." Among other points, this discussion should include developing a financial strategy, revamping the emergency response plan to address issues that arose during the crisis, and working toward a return to normalcy with a special focus on boosting staff morale. Daugherty suggests sharing positive customer feedback with the team. "In our business, you know right away if you did a good job or you didn't do a good job," he says. "It's all about the instant gratification of taking care of a customer, whether in normal times or in times of crisis."

While the hotels impacted by the bombings are buoyed by guest responses like the glowing review the Davey family posted on TripAdvisor, the staff is less interested in the praise they have received from the media. The *Boston Globe*, *USA Today*, and other media outlets commended the Lenox's response during the Marathon bombings, but the employees maintain that the crisis highlighted the hospitality they provide every day. "People make a lot of to-do about us feeding the special services," Donahue says, "but I view our lobby as my living room, and when somebody comes into your living room, the first thing you're going to ask is: 'Are you thirsty? Would you like something to eat?' Our response was just a natural extension of our business." ❏

TOP: COURTESY OF THE FAIRMONT COPLEY PLAZA; BOTTOM: NICK DINATALE

STAR POWER

The hotel clerk speaks Mandarin. The guest room has a teakettle and slippers. The breakfast menu lists dim sum, congee, and fried rice. Where are you? No, not Beijing. Try Paris. Or Vancouver. Or Boston.

China's rapidly expanding role in global hospitality is sparking changes in the industry worldwide. Here's how to keep up.

BY JULIE RATTEY

Thanks largely to a growing economy and an expanding middle class in China, the country's hospitality industry is on the rise, and hotels around the world are angling to profit from it. "We can expect to see China become the number-one country in terms of both receiving and sending tourists in the next five to seven years," said Taleb Rifai, secretary-general of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, in a 2011 interview with Spanish state television network RTVE. That translates to big money and more jobs for countries welcoming Chinese visitors. The Chinese took 83 million international trips in 2012,

and spent more money in the process—\$102 billion—than travelers from any other country. Eager to nab their share of the profit, countries including the US have expedited the visa process for Chinese travelers. The White House anticipates the number of visitors from China to the US to grow by 135 percent by 2016.

"The size of the market in proportion to what we'll see 10, 15 years from now is only the tip of the iceberg," says Edwin Fuller (SMG'68), chair of the Boston University School of Hospitality Administration's Advisory Board.

We've compiled tips from Fuller and other hospitality experts to help you welcome

guests from China—no matter where you are in the world.

KNOW YOUR NIHAO ("HELLO").

What better way to make guests feel welcome than by speaking their language? Marriott International, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, and Hilton Hotels & Resorts have this covered, thanks to Chinese welcome programs—*Li Yu* ("serve with courtesy"), *Huanying* ("welcome"), and Starwood Personalized Travel. Collectively, the programs include Mandarin-speaking staff and perks like Chinese-language websites, guest welcome packets, newspapers, and TV channels.

Even if a property has limited resources, says Fuller, the former president and managing director for Marriott International Lodging, teaching staff a few basic phrases is a step in the right direction.

MIND YOUR MENU.

"The main concept of the hospitality industry is providing travelers a home away from home," says Zoe Ho, a SHA assistant professor who teaches a course on tourism and hospitality industries in China. She says offering Chinese guests their favorite foods is one way to make them feel welcome. Through their welcome programs, Hilton, Starwood, and Marriott offer breakfast items like congee (a kind of Chinese porridge), dumplings, and fried dough fritters. Other hotels plan to follow suit. In a global survey for the 2012 Hotels.com "Chinese International Travel Monitor (CITM)," 51 percent of hotelier respondents plan to offer Chinese breakfasts; 47 percent plan to offer Chinese tea.

WATCH OUT FOR FAUX PAS.

TIME reports that in New York City, the Marriott Marquis replaced some room numbers with names to avoid using the "unlucky" number four, and the Waldorf Astoria is careful not to lodge Chinese employees on higher floors than their bosses. Instituting cultural sensitivity training at your establishment can go a long way toward avoiding missteps. Fuller suggests reading up on Chinese customs or, better yet, traveling to China and experiencing the culture firsthand.

MAKE PAYMENT A SNAP.

Sixty-two percent of the CITM survey respondents expect to partner with UnionPay, China's bank card association, to process payments from Chinese guests. The Ritz in London even installed China UnionPay terminals.

MASTER THE BALANCING ACT.

Ho references a hotelier in Thailand who told CNBC that he feared catering to Chinese guests would cost him European clients who prefer quieter dining environments than guests from China and some other countries enjoy. But it shouldn't be either-or, says Ho: a hotel could provide private dining areas for noisier groups. Some hotel groups even create upscale brands geared toward Chinese

cliente; the Grand Mercure Mei Jue and the InterContinental Hualuxe offer cultural touches such as tai chi sessions, tea served by a certified tea master, and accommodations inspired by contemporary Chinese design.

ESTABLISH BRAND LOYALTY IN CHINA.

An international hotel brand that builds properties in China can reap benefits not only from inbound and domestic travelers, but from outbound ones as well. "Chinese guests choose familiar brands when traveling abroad," global management consulting firm A.T. Kearney reports in "China's Hospitality Industry—Rooms for Growth." Brand loyalty "becomes more important as more Chinese travelers book their accommodations online or directly through a hotel rather than through a travel agent or tour operator." Brands should have a presence on Chinese travel sites, they advise: one of the firm's studies revealed that 58 percent of Chinese travelers book through sites like Qunar.com or Lvmama.com. The company adds that loyalty programs also influence Chinese clients' choice of hotels.

As brands enter the market in China, they'll want to keep an eye on the competition. In 2012, two China-based companies—Shanghai Jin Jiang International Hotels and Home Inns & Hotels Management—broke into the top 10 of *HOTELS* magazine's annual ranking of hotel companies worldwide for the first time.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.

To market to China, says Fuller, "you do not just fly over for a one-week visit and say hi. You have to invest time, energy, money, and effort into the market to be able to get your fair share. It is still a relationship-driven business in China." California, which expects more than one million Chinese visitors by 2015, has launched a "China Ready" educational program for its hospitality industry, participated in wholesaler road shows in China, and run familiarization tours for key China travel trade partners. The Orange County Visitors Association, of which Fuller is president and CEO, opened a Shanghai office this year and sent a delegation of destination marketing organization representatives to Shanghai in October. A.T. Kearney also advises developing relationships with the National Tourism Administration and with local and provincial governments.

SHOW RESPECT.

In addition to understanding cultural differences, Fuller says, "Don't underestimate the customer standing in front of you." Fuller recounts an anecdote he heard from an industry acquaintance about a man from China who was browsing at a fashion store at South Coast Plaza, a luxury shopping center in Orange County, California. Eyeing the man's casual ensemble, the store security guard pegged him as an unlikely customer. Just as the guard was about to ask him whether he really had business at the store, the man approached a salesperson for assistance—and spent \$2 million.

As the global hospitality industry learns how to welcome the Chinese, it's also looking out for the next big player. In August, Starwood simultaneously announced a Preferred Guest Android app in Chinese and new food and amenities for Indian guests. It looks like travelers can expect even more diversity on their breakfast menus. ■

CHINA'S RISE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IS DRAWING SHA STUDENTS TO THE COUNTRY.

China's growth in the hospitality industry is affecting what SHA students study—and where they send their résumés. "Maybe 5 or 10 years ago, most SHA international students would pursue their future career in the United States," says Assistant Professor Zoe Ho. "But recently, after they graduate, they all want to go back to their home countries—maybe Thailand or China or Korea or Japan—because their market is growing faster." She adds that international hotel brands like Marriott and Starwood sometimes hire these students for training programs in the United States, then assign them jobs as supervisors or assistant managers in the graduates' home countries. "It's a great opportunity for them."

China's emergence as a key player in global hospitality didn't catch SHA by surprise. "SHA foresaw the emerging Chinese market two years ago and decided to offer an elective course," says Ho, referencing her class on China's tourism and hospitality industries. The class's trip to China includes visits to hotels and conversations with hospitality personnel. "We want our students to learn more about Chinese culture so they can better accommodate their future customers."

Learning to Make Magic

Why the student in the suit is a big kid at heart

BY ANDREW THURSTON

YOU REMEMBER THOSE CLASSMATES. YOU'RE in jeans and a sweatshirt; they're in a suit. Just what are they thinking, you wonder? This is college, not the office. They're making you look like you just scraped yourself out of bed and into class (so what if it's true?). Still, you have a nagging suspicion they're probably going to go far.

Alec Dalton is that classmate, and he's going to go far.

For someone who wears a suit to class, Dalton ('15, SMG'15) has the enthusiasm of a big kid when he talks about his hospitality career plans. His dream job is to become chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, and he can trace the roots of his ambition back to a family vacation at age nine.

It was the Daltons' second visit to Walt Disney World in Florida. Buzzing from a morning in the parks and eagerly anticipating the evening fireworks, young Alec spotted a Disney cast member, "and something inside of me clicked," he says. "I realized that I wanted to play a part in shaping the industry that was creating all of the happiness I was feeling."

Dalton has since returned to Walt Disney World as an adult—to intern as a concierge at Disney's Grand Floridian Resort and Spa—without any of the magic dimming. "It's interesting to see what's behind the curtain," he says. "I love the effects that a fireworks show or a theme park attraction produce, but I also like to learn how that 'magic' works."

At Boston University, he's studying what makes the industry tick. With help from University and Marriott scholarships, Dalton is tackling two degrees, in the School of Hospitality Administration and the School of Management, to improve his understanding of "the analytical aspects of hospitality organizations." He doesn't waste a minute



IT'S INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT'S BEHIND THE CURTAIN.

of the school day in his pursuit of knowledge and experience—hence the suit for class.

"I attend a lot of networking events and industry programs that require me to wear a suit," he says of his average day at college. "I tend to jam-pack my schedule, not leaving me enough time to change at any point. So I usually suit-up when I wake up in the morning until I go to bed at night."

As well as buckling down on two degrees, Dalton is the campus representative for Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Internships and

Programs and serves as vice president of SHA's student government. He helped found BU's chapter of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, is an active member of the National Society for Minorities in Hospitality and Alpha Kappa Psi professional business fraternity, and has completed four internships, adding The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Grand Heritage Hotel Group, and Hotel Commonwealth to the list alongside his work for Disney. Friends sometimes wonder if this is hospitality overkill—it's not like this is a job; shouldn't he have some fun at college, too?

But for Dalton, this is fun. "As the old adage says: when you find something that you love to do, nothing else matters. I simply love what I do."

Whether he's studying organizational strategy or service delivery systems, Dalton says he has one goal: sharing a little magic and giving vacationers "the most memory for their money." ❧

LEIGH MARIE PHOTOGRAPHY

COURTESY OF: FROM LEFT, DUNKIN' BRANDS, HOTELAVE, MASSACHUSETTS LODGING ASSOCIATION

Roundtable discussions are hardly unusual in college classrooms. But what if the person sitting next to you is the chef who catered the wedding of Elizabeth Taylor's daughter? Or the asset manager you recognize from appearances on CNN? Or the prestigious CEO who could help you land your next job?

That's just what SHA students encounter in the dean's distinguished lecture series featuring presentations and discussions with hospitality leaders. We've asked three experts to share their industry predictions for 2014, along with their strategies for keeping pace with change.

BY JULIE RATTEY

Stan Frankenthaler

Vice President of Global Product Innovation and Executive Chef at Dunkin' Brands, Inc.



WHEN "INNOVATION" IS IN YOUR job title, you'd better have a knack for keeping up with change—and Stan Frankenthaler has. To discover what consumers want before they know it themselves, he reads consumer research, listens to customers, interacts with young people, and immerses himself in what's new, from food to technology to music. In dreaming up Dunkin' Donuts creations—Bagel Twists, anyone?—he also collaborates with colleagues of varied expertise. "Diversity amongst the team is incredibly important for developing the broadest and best innovation," says the three-time James Beard Award nominee.

"Diversity amongst the team is incredibly important to innovation."

Brands need to pay attention not just to what customers want to buy, but where. Dunkin' Donuts is using Wi-Fi, comfortable seating, and soft lighting to court afternoon customers. For 2014, Frankenthaler predicts more engaging restaurant spaces, coupled with technology like charging stations and digital menu boards. "I think restaurants are going to continue to look more like your family room," he says, "where the space becomes more entertaining."

Michelle Russo

President and Founder, hotelAVE



AS PRESIDENT OF A HOTEL real estate asset management firm, Michelle Russo has an ambitious strategy: "One way we keep up with change is we try to get ahead of it." One of her tactics is to track trends in airlines and retail for possible crossover, so she was intrigued when the Shaw's grocery chain ditched its customer rewards cards this year. Loyalty programs are expensive, and Russo questions whether they really create fidelity. "I'm a frequent traveler, and I have cards with every lodging company," she says. "My loyalty is more defined by my business travel pattern." Russo has noticed some hotels switching to recognition-based models, and suspects the industry will continue to reevaluate loyalty programs in 2014.

"One way we keep up with change is we try to get ahead of it."

She also predicts hotels will encounter the ongoing challenge of satisfying both boomers and millennials. Younger customers, she says, "like to spend more time in the lobby, and I think baby boomers spend more time in their rooms." Some boutique brands "don't even have desks in their rooms anymore. I think that would cause a boomer's head to spin."

Paul Sacco

President and CEO, Massachusetts Lodging Association



"WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH CHANGING, YOU'RE through," says Paul Sacco. Being inquisitive about what's new—and being willing to try it—has helped Sacco take initiative in the hotel industry. At the Sheraton Lexington, for example, he helped develop a "good night" guarantee: if customers weren't satisfied, they didn't pay. But common sense also keeps him from getting swept up in trends simply because they're in vogue. In the early '90s, as vice president of regional operations for Omni Hotels, Sacco opted for recognition-based loyalty programs instead of the popular points-based model. "I felt, *Well, if they're good customers, they should be rewarded anyway.*"

"When you're through changing, you're through."

Trends come and go, says Sacco, but the customer's essential needs don't change. To succeed in 2014, a hospitality leader needs to stay vigilant about securing the basics: efficient check-in, immaculate accommodations, good service, and strong price value. Sacco also stresses that how you treat the people behind the desk is just as important as how you treat the people in front of it. ❧



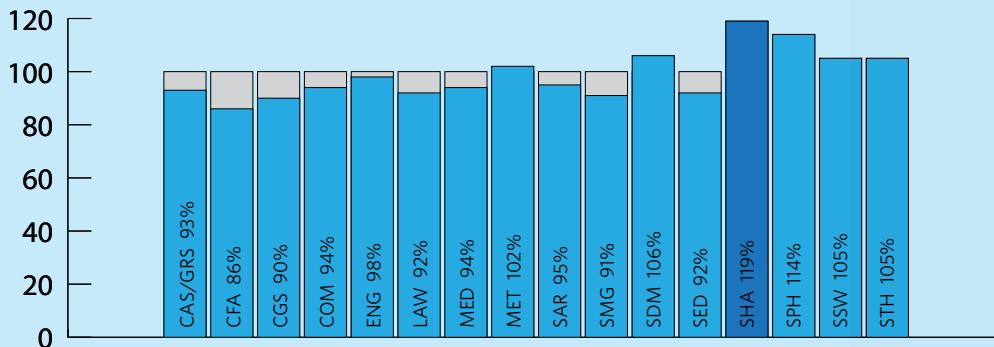
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This year, alumni from BU's 16 schools and colleges competed to see which group could increase giving participation by the widest margin over 2012. Each gift you made to the Campaign for Boston University earned a vote for SHA, and we closed 2013 at 119% over last year—the highest increase of all the schools. Thanks to you, SHA won bragging rights and a check for \$50,000!



To learn more about the Campaign for BU, visit www.bu.edu/campaign

