

Center for Hospitality Research Explores Human Resources

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Roundtable Invites Practitioners and Faculty to Share HR Issues

Nearly two dozen practitioners and academics discussed a number of current and future issues regarding strategic human resources at an industry roundtable held in September at the School of Hotel Administration. The roundtable, chaired by Bruce Tracey, an associate professor at the School of Hotel Administration, was part of a series facilitated by Cornell's Center for Hospitality Research.



Left to right: Michael Tews, assistant professor, The Ohio State University; Carolyn Clark, SVP, HR, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts; Henrik Mansson, SVP, HR, Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts; and Alan Momeyer, VP, HR, Loews Corp.

Given the growing concerns about the economy and the dynamics associated with ownership priorities - especially private equity investors - roundtable participants focused on the strategic and operational role requirements for the human resources function. Changes in ownership structures have created a number of challenges for human resources. In many cases, tension and ambiguity is created when a company is acquired and new owners become directly involved in operational decision making, such as the selection or retention of general managers. In contrast, some owners and private equity interests have provided needed clarity and assume a more hands-off approach regarding performance management. Thus, different ownership philosophies dictate different role requirements for human resources leaders. However, regardless of ownership structures, Chuck Conine, of Hospitality HR Solutions, emphasized the need for human resources to maintain focus on continuous improvement, thereby 'making the firm a better asset than it was when they [the new owner] acquired it.'

Building on this point, the roundtable participants focused on the ways in which human resources leaders can help balance the demands and sometimes competing interests associated with asset management, brand management, and human capital management. Many agree about the importance of proper brand management as a guide to human resources policies, while others view asset management concerns to be instrumental for developing HR strategies. The key is designing and implementing a flexible HR system which creates value for ownership by capitalizing on the strengths of the firm's human capital.

To view photos of the event, please visit

<http://univcomm.cornell.edu/photography/3Dshows/shaevents/20080905hrroundtable/gallery.html>.

For more information about future roundtables at the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, please visit

<http://hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/events/roundtables/>.

About The Center for Hospitality Research

A unit of the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, The Center for Hospitality Research (CHR) sponsors research designed to improve practices in the hospitality industry. Under the lead of the center's 73 corporate affiliates, experienced scholars work closely with business executives to discover new insights into strategic, managerial and operating practices. The center also publishes the award-winning hospitality journal, the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly (formerly the Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly). To learn more about center and its projects, visit www.chr.cornell.edu.

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