

## Cornell Study Underscores Importance of Manager Integrity

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### Report Finds That African-American Employees Are More Sensitive to Managers' Inconsistencies

Different employee ethnic groups have diverse views about the importance of their manager's behavioral integrity, according to a new report from Cornell's Center for Hospitality Research. In particular, the report finds, African-American employees take notice when their supervisors' words do not match up to their actions. This can lead to numerous human resources issues in a multicultural workplace, including employee turnover, according to the report.

The study, 'The Importance of Behavioral Integrity in a Multicultural Workplace,' by Tony Simons, Ray Friedman, Leigh Anne Liu, and Judi McLean Parks, is available at no charge from the center's website, at [www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/pubs/reports/2008.html](http://www.hotelschool.cornell.edu/research/chr/pubs/reports/2008.html).

Simons and his co-authors explain that 'behavioral integrity' describes the extent to which one person sees another as living by his or her word. But the key to this point is the perceptions of employees. They surveyed more than 1,900 employees comprising several ethnic and racial groups at 107 hotels to determine how those employees view their supervisor's integrity. The results of this survey showed the special sensitivity of African-American employees to management's integrity failures.

Simons is an associate professor at the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, and is the author of the book, *The Integrity Dividend: Leading by the Power of Your Word* (Jossey-Bass), which details the importance of managerial integrity. Friedman is a professor at Vanderbilt University, Liu is an assistant professor at Georgia State University, and McLean Parks is a professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Expanding on the book's findings, this study examines how different employee ethnic groups might understand and react differently to cues about their manager's consistency. The authors found that African-American employees in this study were especially sensitive to violations of behavioral integrity-and they were particularly harsh with other African-American managers. One other key point is that the study found that senior managers' integrity trickles down to influence behavior and attitudes throughout the organization.

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