

The phrase “innovation in hospitality and tourism” yields thousands of Web search results, and a high proportion are based on academic perspectives. For industry, the action or process of change is an ever-present reality, and the way in which it is embraced and managed is a key determinant of the organization’s ability to compete. Given the importance of this issue, I am grateful to Chandana (Chandi) Jayawardena for examining the practice of innovation around the world and, together with his writing team, for providing a rich and detailed set of insights. Chandi is a highly experienced practitioner and academic, and in this issue, he has drawn together a broad range of contributions to more precisely define the role of innovation in hospitality and tourism.

*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*

## How does innovation help in tourism around the world?

The word “innovation” has been a buzzword for some time now. There are many different definitions, widely varying based on different types of professions, industries and regions. This theme issue therefore seeks to examine innovative initiatives in the hospitality and tourism industry around the world and redefine the word “innovation” in the context of hospitality and tourism management.

The theme issue draws on ideas from four academic conferences on hospitality and tourism management held in 2017 and 2018 and examines the concept of innovation from different geographical and industry sector perspectives. The concluding article cites 13 innovation types, each related to different facets of the industry and to different countries. The wide array of innovation types is encompassed in a new definition of innovation, derived from a summary analysis conducted by the theme editor.

Innovation is the art of efficient and practical implementation of new, creative and “outside the box” ideas, sustainable solutions for challenges to improve processes, products and services with input and support from organization’s teams, with an overarching focus to enhance competitive advantages, value, customer satisfaction, organizational productivity, revenues and profitability.

Having analyzed innovation in hospitality and tourism from different parts of the world, it is felt that a shorter definition would be useful in identifying common elements of “Innovation” in most of these new papers. Therefore, in the concluding paper, the following shorter definition is presented:

Innovation is the art of implementing new ideas to improve productivity, products and services, while enhancing customer satisfaction, revenues and profitability.

In addition, three essential and common ingredients of innovation are observed in most of the papers:

- (1) *Vision* – This provides an aspirational and clear guide for action to improve.
- (2) *Mission* – This instills a strong commitment and sense of duty to achieve the vision.



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- (3) *Passion* – It refers to enjoying, enthusiastically acting the vision with an eager interest.

The theme editor is thankful to a highly innovative institute, which organizes around 30 academic conferences every year – The International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIKM). Delegates at three of their recent conferences – the International Conference on Hospitality and Tourism Management (ICOHT) 2017 and 2018 and the International Conference on Hotel Administration (ICOHT) 2018, made valuable inputs to re-defining the concept of innovation. Half of the papers featured in this theme issue originated from presentations at these conferences.

Now, let's take a trip around the world to investigate how innovation helps tourism in 17 countries in North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Europe, the Middle East, South Asia, the Far East, Australia and the Pacific, written by a versatile team of 24 scholars from 16 countries.

**Chandana (Chandi) Jayawardena**  
*Theme Editor*

#### **About the Theme Editor**

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. He has spent four decades in hospitality and tourism industry in various capacities, including Hotel General Manager, Professor, Dean and Consultant. As a hotelier, Chandi has managed 8 premier hotels and provided hospitality to 34 heads of state/government. As a Professor, he has coauthored or edited/coedited 10 books and 11 journal theme issues and published over 110 papers. 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 and Tourist Association, the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association, Sandals International, Rocco Forte Hotels and Heads of Hospitality and Tourism Ontario. He is an International Ambassador and a Past President of the world's largest professional body in the hospitality industry – Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA), now the Institute of Hospitality, UK.