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Asking the Big Questions

Michael C. Sturman

Cornell University, mcs5@cornell.edu

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Asking the Big Questions

Abstract

[Excerpt] This issue of the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* is the first to be published by Sage Publications. As Gary Thompson notes elsewhere in this issue, this change will truly be a great benefit for the *Cornell Quarterly* and its readers. As excited as we here at the *Cornell Quarterly* are about this procedural change, I anticipate that it will be the content of this issue that will excite our readers. This issue has allowed researchers and practitioners to ask tough questions on a sensitive topic. The question I have for you, the reader, is, do you allow yourself to be excited by the opportunity to ask tough questions?

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Comments

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From the Editor

Asking the Big Questions

This issue of the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* is the first to be published by Sage Publications. As Gary Thompson notes elsewhere in this issue, this change will truly be a great benefit for the *Cornell Quarterly* and its readers. As excited as we here at the *Cornell Quarterly* are about this procedural change, I anticipate that it will be the content of this issue that will excite our readers. This issue has allowed researchers and practitioners to ask tough questions on a sensitive topic. The question I have for you, the reader, is, do you allow yourself to be excited by the opportunity to ask tough questions?

The section on ethnic (or racial) differences in tipping is noteworthy, not only because of what each author says but also because of the significance of the topic. The subject is a prickly one, so prickly that many would dare not touch it. But these authors, this editor, and this publisher took on the challenge. You, our readers, will judge how well we handled it. There is no possibility that this issue's articles can resolve the



Michael C. Sturman

issue of racial differences with regard to tipping practices. No topic as complex as this could be solved in a single issue of a research-based practitioner journal. But first steps have been taken, and discussions have begun. It is the process of asking questions, especially the questions that we may not always be so desirous of hearing, that advances the opportunity to think and learn.

While research is often characterized by small incremental steps in thinking, we researchers also have the opportunity to spend time thinking about complex and controversial issues that businesses may not have the time or desire to address. Issues of this kind may not represent theoretical situations but instead involve issues that affect the way business is done. The *Cornell Quarterly* provides an opportunity to communicate some of this work. We certainly have done so in the past, we do so in the present issue, and I expect to continue doing so in the future. With the change of publisher and the special section highlighting but one type of controversial issue that research can address, I am hopeful that this journal can provide readers with the opportunity to

engage in meaningful discussions about critical matters that are important to the management of hospitality businesses. I certainly hope researchers will continue to ask the controversial questions—the big questions—that need to be asked to make fundamental advances in thought and work. In part, this means tackling issues that are truly troubling practitioners, but it also means asking the questions that many may not feel comfortable asking.

Beginning a new year with a new publisher presents us with more than merely symbolic change. I see the *Cornell Quarterly* as being reinvigorated in its mission:

to publish research-based insights of use to hospitality industry practitioners. I also see these changes as providing a renewed opportunity for the *Cornell Quarterly* to be the forum for sophisticated debate of controversial issues. We need research to challenge our assumptions. We need research to force us to face controversial issues. It is my hope that the new *Cornell Quarterly*, published by Sage, will serve as a crucial vessel through which researchers and practitioners can communicate such research and, ultimately, help the readers of the *Cornell Quarterly* perform better in their work.—*M.C.S.*