PolyU’s Teaching and Research Hotel Named SHTM Tops World Rankings
PolyU Tourist Satisfaction Index Launched
Executive Development Breaks New Ground
Journal of China Tourism Research
Editor-in-Chief: Professor Haiyan Song, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
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Message from Director of School

An icon is an image that represents something more than we can see at first. It suggests that an experience awaits, which is very much true of the dedicated premises built for the SHTM by PolyU that is now taking shape in Tsim Sha Tsui East. With this issue of Horizons, I am very pleased to announce that the hotel, now at its full height and undergoing internal fit-out, has been named Hotel ICON. In the pages that follow we hear from the hotel’s General Manager, Mr Richard Hatter, about the tailor-made experience he and his team are creating.

As the anticipation builds for Hotel ICON’s grand opening, we also have an immediate cause for celebration. The School is now ranked Number 2 in the world in terms of research and scholarship activities according to a study published late last year in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research. Our coverage in this issue provides details on the new rankings, including our move to Number 1 in the world in the most recently considered period, from 2002 to 2006.

Yet our world-leading research would not be as significant if we did not produce outstanding graduates. In this issue we cover the excitement of the PolyU 15th Congregation (SHTM) with new graduates ready to take on the world, and profile the SHTM’s Outstanding Alumni 2009, the energetic and inspirational Ms Alison Yau.

Also featured is the launch of the PolyU Tourist Satisfaction Index, a project led by the School’s Associate Director, Professor Haiyan Song. Intended as a public service to measure Hong Kong’s competitiveness as a tourist destination, the Index is the latest SHTM initiative aimed at boosting tourism’s already substantial contribution to the local economy.

As always, this issue is also filled with coverage of the School’s many activities and includes reports on a selection of our recent publications in Research Horizons. Even at the top of the world we are moving on.

Professor Kaye Chon
Chair Professor and Director
School of Hotel and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
Creating an

ICON

“T he best way to predict the future”, said Mr Richard Hatter, General Manager of the dedicated SHTM premises being built by PolyU, “is to create it”. With the building now at its full height, the future is well and truly underway in Tsim Sha Tsui East.

Even the hotel’s name has been selected to signify something not previously experienced. As a teaching and research hotel in a commercial district, Hotel ICON is set to become a pre-eminent symbol of advanced hospitality and tourism education around the world. The objective will be to pave the way for the future, grooming the next generation of Asian hospitality. “Together we will shape and refine young management talent emerging from the PolyU SHTM and as such both the PolyU and the hotel will benefit tremendously”. Hotel ICON will become an ICON in the Hong Kong and Asian hotel market, consolidating its niche as an independent commercial business, connected to the University with an umbilical cord.

Speaking of how the hotel concept is being refined now that the striking and easy-to-remember name has been selected, Mr Hatter said that it would tailor-make an experience for its guests. One way in which that will be achieved will be through dedicated prototype guests rooms used to develop and showcase new technologies and hotel designs. Not only will guests benefit, but the rooms will allow further research into and the application of advanced concepts in hotel management fashioned to make possible a more sustainable future.

Another crucial feature of the hotel’s design will be the Club Floor. Intent on providing “a destination unto itself in the hotel”, PolyU has contracted Conran and Partners, a renowned architecture and design consultancy, to create just the right ambiance.

The floor will have a variety of active and passive zones, with Mr Hatter describing a “very interesting space” that would be “unlike any hotel I’ve ever worked in”. It will include a reception area, a restaurant overlooking Victoria Harbour, a lounge, bar, private rooms of different sizes, a multifunction dining and meeting room, a wine cellar and kitchen. The mix of business will be very international, with a dominant Asian aspect.

Mr Hatter also pointed to the importance of the Club as an educational venue. He explained that the very best SHTM students would be able to gain experience in the Club that would be invaluable when they enter the job market. In a broader sense, he said “we want students to be empowered to have an experience in a top notch hotel”.

Hotel Update
With a tag line of "being brilliant together", Mr Hatter emphasised that "how we involve the faculty and students with the hotel is a very key aspect of what I’m setting up". “It’s all about people”, he said, giving his position a much wider frame of reference. "The people we train, the people we employ and the people we look after.

Plans are currently being made to determine how many students will be able to complete their Work-Integrated Education requirements at the hotel, and up to 100 could be proudly serving as Hotel ICON interns when operations get underway. Another 50 will be working with the opening team in the second half of this year.

The hotel’s executive committee is now in place, and the remaining 350 permanent positions should be filled in the second quarter of this year. Ms Judy Hou, the hotel’s Director of Human Capital, stressed that recruitment would be driven by the understanding that to provide quality service and a cutting-edge learning environment, the establishment would need to be “more than just a training hotel”.

Potential staff members, she said, will need to display their excellence through passion, confidence and “an inclination or willingness to serve”. Each of them will have a “can-do attitude, or a will-do attitude”.

Ms Hou will be attending job and career fairs to heighten awareness of the opportunities available in Hotel ICON as the excitement builds for its grand opening. For more information or to submit job applications, please email hmicon@polyu.edu.hk.
In a very significant move up the world rankings for hospitality and tourism educational institutions, the SHTM has moved ahead two places to be ranked second in the world based on research output for the fifteen-year period from 1992 to 2006. In a ringing endorsement of the School’s dedicated researchers, visionary leadership and enthusiastic and influential support base, the rankings suggest both outstanding achievement and a taste of things to come.

The rankings were released in November as part of a comprehensive study of the top 100 hospitality and tourism programmes published by the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. Moving up from fourth place in 2005, the SHTM is now ranked behind only Cornell University in the fifteen-year list. It retained its place as the top school in Asia, and is the only non-US school in the top five.

SHTM Director and Chair Professor Kaye Chon, who since 2000 has guided the School to its leading position, said that “as a global centre of excellence in hospitality and tourism education for the 21st Century, the School is positioned to lead the world’s hospitality and tourism education in the years to come”.

In the most recent sub-period of 2002 to 2006, the SHTM has already achieved that goal, moving to first place in terms of the number of studies published and the number of individual scholars contributing to publications. This impressive effort places PolyU ahead of 13 US, two UK and two Australian universities in the top 18, and cements its position as the only non-US university in the elite top five.

As an indicator of research focus and prowess, the rankings provide insight into the extent to which the SHTM has been effective in furthering hospitality and tourism knowledge. That effectiveness will be further enhanced with the unveiling of Hotel ICON, the SHTM’s teaching and research hotel, later this year.

Professor Chon noted that the School’s new ranking is just the beginning. “As we are preparing for the opening of the hotel in
2010, we seek to scale new heights and attain a higher level of excellence in the years ahead”, he said.

Behind this constant pursuit of excellence is a belief that all knowledge produced at the School must be immediately relevant to the industry it serves. With that goal in mind, the School draws on the experience and expertise of an Advisory Committee that includes local, regional and international industry leaders who play an active role in shaping the curriculum and working through development matters.

The SHTM would like to take this opportunity to thank the dedicated committee members for their role in pushing it to the top of the world.
The SHTM’s latest cohort of 589 graduates are embarking on their careers with inspiring words ringing in their ears following the PolyU 15th Congregation (SHTM) held at the Jockey Club Auditorium on 11 November. Receiving their degrees and diplomas this year were 2 PhD, 2 MPhil, 120 MSC, 1 PgD, 250 BSc, 55 BA and 159 HD graduates.

The keynote speakers at both sessions emphasised how the time spent at the SHTM had equipped graduates with the skills and knowledge necessary to take up leadership positions in the hospitality and tourism industry, but that what they do with their education is all up to them.

Mr Mark Conklin, Vice President of Marriott International, defined the essential qualities of leadership in his address to the first session, entitled “Give the World the Best You Have, and the Best Will Come Back to You”. Mr Conklin’s 30 years in the industry have allowed him to observe many exceptional people, he said, all of whom “let their life speak” and have “made a meaningful difference” to those around them.

Noting that the overriding qualities of successful leadership are “caring for others” and exhibiting “the courage to do what others thought couldn’t be done”, Mr Conklin challenged current graduates. He asked them to become exceptional leaders by believing they could make a difference, making promises about what they would do, doing what they promised and holding themselves responsible for their commitments and efforts.
“None of you can give more than your best”, he added, “but with practice you’ll never be satisfied giving anything less”.

Former Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts CEO Dr Giovanni Angelini, keynote speaker at the second session, also challenged those about to take up leadership roles to make a difference. “Leadership is not about exercising power”, he said, “but about contributing. This will happen when we realise that leadership is not a privilege, but a responsibility.”

Particularly important for the hotel and hospitality industry, he emphasised, is the ability to respond to and learn from change. “People who succeed most in their careers are those who can constantly transform themselves, those who can constantly improve themselves”, Mr Angelini said. He concluded by offering the audience 10 patterns of behaviour that make such “continuous transformation and improvements possible”, including the ability to “look at change as an exciting adventure, rather than a disruption”.

Asia-Pacific Region Poised for Growth

Both keynote speakers assured the graduates that despite the recent economic turmoil, the Asia-Pacific region, and mainland China in particular, is well-poised for expansion. “Asia-Pacific has the world’s fastest growing economies, most dynamic populations and, in many ways, best use of technology”, Mr Conklin stated. He noted that the region witnessed the construction of nearly 1000 new hotels in 2008, with a further 775 slated to open by the end of 2010.

Mr Angelini pointed to the more than 100 million Chinese nationals expected to travel outside the country by 2012.

These two honourable guests have many years of industry experience to draw on, but two fresh BSc graduates in Hotel Management and in Tourism Management who gave the valedictory speeches – Gloria Chan and Cecilia Li – had equally inspiring words for those in attendance.

Ms Chan told the first session the story of a young woman who cursed fate for placing her in a higher diploma programme in a field in which she had no interest. After two years of study, an overseas internship and the chance to enrol in a BSc programme, she realised she had “found her direction in life”.

Revealing herself to be that woman, Ms Chan said she is now embarking on an MPhil degree and truly believes that “travel and tourism improve the quality of our society” by promoting “cultural exchange” and “better understanding among nations”.

During the second session, Miss Li emphasised that “the greatness of tourism is that it enhances the exchanging of cultures and brings people together”. She answered Mr Conklin and Mr Angelini’s challenge to make a difference by stating that she and her fellow graduates were “ready to prove our value to the industry and to society. We promise you we will live our lives to the fullest!”

The SHTM congratulates all graduates, and is excited about their prospects as they move into a new phase of achievement.
The PolyU Tourist Satisfaction Index (PolyU TSI) marks a watershed for the Hong Kong tourism industry. Launched on 17 December at a ceremony attended by the media and industry executives, the PolyU TSI is a pioneering project attempting to measure just what satisfies visitors.

Project leader, SHTM Associate Director and Chair Professor of Tourism Haiyan Song, described the very simple way in which the Index will work. “Once a year we will announce the PolyU TSI”, he said, “to tell the industry how well it is doing in providing quality services, and how satisfied tourists are with different tourism products”.

This focus on quality and how it translates into customer satisfaction will ensure that all stakeholders in Hong Kong – not only industry players, but also government agencies and the general public – have enough quality information for decision making and planning.

Professor Song explained that the PolyU TSI would be published free of charge to maximise its benefit, describing the data as “purely public access information”.

With tourism a major pillar of the Hong Kong economy, that information will be vital when the city judges how well it caters to the needs of visitors from around the world. The research team, which includes SHTM Director and Chair Professor Kaye Chon, Professor Song, Professor Anna Mattila of the Pennsylvania State University, and Dr Gang Li from the University of Surrey, amongst others, has already gathered information on the satisfaction of visitors from seven major source markets with six tourism-related sectors in Hong Kong.

By measuring aspects of the tourist experience such as value for money, the fulfilment of expectations and specific elements of industry performance, the PolyU TSI is the first attempt to relate satisfaction with one part of the industry to overall satisfaction with Hong Kong as a major tourist destination.

Professor Song noted that the overall objective of the PolyU TSI is to allow the industry to “look at Hong Kong as an international destination compared with similar neighbouring destinations such as Macau, Singapore, Guangzhou and Shenzhen”. The industry can then adjust its practices to hone its competitive edge.

The SHTM is proud to support this initiative and looks forward to the economic benefit that the PolyU TSI will help bring to Hong Kong.
Developing Executives at Home and Abroad

Vital to the SHTM’s role as a centre of excellence is its ability to disseminate cutting-edge knowledge to the hospitality and tourism industry around the world.

Breakthrough Agreement in Abu Dhabi

The School signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) in November to collaborate on developing educational strategies to share best practices and research findings with local industry stakeholders.

The move will work to hone Abu Dhabi’s ability to engage the rapidly emerging Asian outbound tourism market, with a particular focus on Chinese tourists.

SHTM Director and Chair Professor Kaye Chon remarked that the agreement demonstrated “Abu Dhabi’s confidence in our ability to deliver to exacting standards”.

Winter School Matches Pace of Change

Running from 25 January to 6 February, the eighth Hong Kong Winter School was co-organised by the SHTM and the Hong Kong Hotels Association, and sponsored by the PATA Foundation and the Mira Hong Kong. The event featured lively and interactive two-day modules delivered by SHTM academics and leading industry professionals.

Professor Kaye Chon kicked off the process with a module on service quality management and strategies, followed by Ms Ariane Steinbeck, Managing Director and Principal of Gettys Hospitality Design and Development, who covered the intricacies of hotel design and renovation strategies.

The SHTM’s Dr Qu Xiao led a module on financial management and investment strategies and Dr Basak Denizci Guillet covered the principles of revenue management. Dr David Jones probed strategic sales and marketing management, and Dr Thomas A. Maier, President of T.A.M. Global Services, considered human resource leadership in changing times.

A Wealth of Training Programmes

The SHTM delivered a range of tailored training programmes to industry professionals recently. Highlights in August included a programme for hotel managers from Jiangsu Province and help with a programme for delegates from western China.

In late November and early December the SHTM provided training for the Zhejiang Tourism Administration and cooperated in holding a two-day seminar on hotel and convention management in Shanghai to ride on the unprecedented attention being paid to the Shanghai World Expo, coming later this year. Training for officials from the Sichuan Tourism Bureau was also provided in mid-December.
Alison Yau is an ideal ambassador for tourism in Hong Kong. She is energetic, cheerful, knowledgeable and has a boundless can-do attitude. Speaking to Horizons on the 38th floor of the Hotel Panorama by Rhombus in Tsim Sha Tsui, her enthusiasm was perfectly framed by the vibrant backdrop of Victoria Harbour.

Recently promoted to Director of Business Development for the Rhombus International Hotels Group, Alison said that her early career motivation was that “I just wanted to make Hong Kong very popular and make the tourists who came to Hong Kong very happy”. She continues to do just that, and is a fitting recipient of the Outstanding Alumni 2009 Award from the SHTM.

A Higher Diploma, Bachelor and MSc graduate of the School, Alison has filled almost every position that the hospitality sector has to offer. She was General Manager of the very successful Hotel LKF in Central before moving across the harbour to the Group’s headquarters. Her strength, she said, “is in dealing with people” but that understates her capacity to motivate and inspire.

Speaking of her time teaching a Christian Action course on hospitality for young people whom “no one thought could progress to higher education”, she told of a “very encouraging result”. One of the young men not only did go on to receive a Higher Diploma, but joined the Rhombus group and through hard work and dedication had just received a promotion to Sales Executive.

For Alison, opportunities are all-important, hard work is mandatory and teamwork is what makes the final difference. Reflecting on her alumni award, she thought that “it is really the accomplishment and achievement of the group of people supporting me”. She also thought back to her time at the SHTM and noted that although she already had experience, the study “gave me opportunities to see more”.

Looking to the future, Alison counselled “don’t waste a chance”. In the new year she was planning to “max out all the opportunities” exploring all possible market segments as the economy rebounded. With her commitment to always moving ahead, Hong Kong will surely continue to benefit.
Exciting Time for Postgraduate Learning

The SHTM’s taught postgraduate programmes are moving from strength to strength, assisted by Professor Adele Ladkin, the new Postgraduate Programme Director.

Professor Ladkin joined the School in May 2009 as a Professor of Tourism, and part of her role was to take up the newly created position. Her brief is to oversee the development and expanded activities of all taught postgraduate programmes, including the Master of Science (MSc) in Hotel and Tourism Management in both Hong Kong and mainland China and the pioneering Doctorate of Hotel and Tourism Management (DHTM). She is primarily responsible for new programme development, curriculum design and programme promotion.

“This is an exciting role, and we are proud to be at the forefront of educational developments in hospitality and tourism”, noted Professor Ladkin, who joined the SHTM from Bournemouth University in the UK. “We are fortunate to have strong industry connections and support, combined with international faculty members with a wealth of expertise”.

A recent innovation overseen by Professor Ladkin was the implementation in September of a two-day residential workshop for new entrants to the MSc programme, 62 of whom were admitted from Hong Kong, mainland China and overseas this year. The workshop comprised team- and skill-building activities, an introduction to the programme and coverage of general academic issues.

It was “basically in response to student need”, Professor Ladkin said. “We wanted to put something in place that would help people coming in from different universities and different backgrounds to get to know one another a bit better and essentially get off to a good start.” Student feedback was “very positive”, she added, and the on-campus workshop will now be a permanent fixture of the programme.

This academic year has also seen the entry of 21 new students to the DHTM programme, which is due to produce its first graduates in 2010. In the words of School Director and Chair Professor Kaye Chon, those graduates will become “the next generation of leaders” in world tourism.
Growing Use Changing Perceptions of Travel Websites in Hong Kong

The number of “e-tourists” in Hong Kong has increased since 2000, show the SHTM’s Dr Catherine Cheung and Professor Rob Law in a recently published research article. With the percentages of both “e-browsers” and “e-buyers” improving, perceptions of secure payment methods and online booking and confirmation have come to the fore. The researchers suggest that tourism practitioners will be able to use their findings to enhance underperforming aspects of existing websites.

Travel Website Use
The Internet is an increasingly significant aspect of the tourism industry for both suppliers and consumers. Suppliers, note the researchers, benefit from having a direct channel to potential customers “at electronic speed and without any time and geographical constraints”. This, they write, reduces distribution costs, increases revenues and can lead to a larger market share. For consumers, the direct channel to suppliers allows for the convenience of “online purchases at any time and in any place”.

Despite this bright outlook, little is known about what makes travel websites successful. In particular, the consumer perspective is rarely considered. The researchers point out that the main reason for website visits in general is “to search for information or purchase because of convenience and speed”. But what about tourism-related websites? Although there has been some suggestion that travel website browsers and users differ in what they think is important in the online experience, the researchers concede that it is “still unknown to what extent consumers perceive the importance of various travel Web sites”.

They thus set out to profile the overall characteristics of online consumers who visit travel websites and to distinguish between those who only browse and those who make actual purchases. They defined “e-browsers” as “Internet users who have visited at least one travel Web site in the past 2 years” without purchasing anything, and “e-buyers” as those who had “purchased on travel Web sites in the past 2 years”.

The Hong Kong Setting
Given that Hong Kong was recently ranked third in the world in the use of credit cards for online purchases, the researchers chose a very appropriate setting for their study. They included five specific questions about website use as part of a “large scale survey on outbound pleasure travel from Hong Kong”. A total of 2012 telephone interviewees could recall whether or not they had visited travel websites in the past two years, with around a third of the interviewees having actually made visits. This was a marked improvement on an earlier survey conducted by one of the researchers, which found that less than a quarter of Hong Kong respondents had visited travel websites in 2000.

Just over half of the recent interviewees who had visited sites were aged between 26 and 35, with almost three-quarters having completed postgraduate degrees. Corresponding to this, there was also an increased likelihood of visiting a travel website as income increased.
These characteristics should be of great interest to site operators, who will now have a better picture of their target consumers.

**Browsers and Purchasers**

However, the researchers remind us that operators will be more interested in knowing the differences between “the characteristics of those who have (and have not) purchased travel-related products online”. Just over 17% of their interviewees were e-buyers, a very encouraging increase from the 6.5% in 2000. Perhaps more interestingly from a marketing perspective, over 92% of the e-buyers were aged between 25 and 55 years and there were no significant gender differences between the e-buyers and e-browsers.

The previous study had found that e-buyers placed emphasis on “secure payment methods, different price ranges for products/services, user friendly system, rapid information search and online booking and confirmation”. In the recent study, e-buyers and e-browsers did not differ significantly in their perceptions of rapid information searches and user friendly systems (important) and different price ranges for products and services (neither important nor unimportant). Only the presence or absence of secure payment methods and online booking and confirmation drew different reactions from the two groups of users.

The more recent e-buyers were much more likely than e-browsers to consider secure payment methods and online and confirmation important. This, write the researchers, “was most likely related to the experience” and the resultant confidence or trust in online purchasing. They point out the trust in online relationships should be fostered carefully to increase the likelihood that e-browsers will become e-buyers.

To do so, website operators need to provide “essential information” on each site, including background information on the company, detailed descriptions of the products and services offered, “and indications of guaranteed protection for confidential and personal data that are transferred on the Internet”. To put this in a slightly different way, operators need to consider how online payment methods could actually enhance the development of trust amongst customers. They also need to ensure security concerns do not form any major barriers to online purchases.

**Encouraging Further Change in Perceptions**

The researchers find encouragement in the change in perceptions amongst travel website users. They suggest that aside from any more specific recommendations, marketing managers should “focus their efforts on designing efficient travel Web sites for all users”. With an eye on the rapid increase in e-buyers, they should also refine their strategies to cope with changing consumer behaviour.

In particular, the researchers argue, marketing managers and travel website operators need to move beyond just developing effective methods of converting e-browsers into e-buyers, keeping in mind that security concerns and trust in online payment methods can be major impediments to growth in this market segment. The challenge now is to determine how trust in a travel website leads to repeat purchases, which are a crucial element of growth in any business.

**Points to Note**

- E-commerce is of growing importance to the tourism industry.
- However, little is known about what determines travel website success.
- E-buyers in Hong Kong consider online security and payment methods more important to website success than do e-browsers.
- Trust-developing methods are needed to convert e-browsers into e-buyers.

Hotel Manager Leadership a Concern in Australia

The leadership styles of younger hotel managers in Australia could well be endangering the delicate balance of human relations within their organisations warn the SHTM’s Dr Basak Denizci Guillet and Ruhi Yaman in a recently published article. Reporting findings from an ongoing study that is seeking to “draw parallels between these styles and the environments in which they are applied”, the researchers examine how personal value systems are influencing the hotel service environment. Their results provide some cause for concern.

Leadership and Ethics

Hospitality managers, argue the researchers, have to face demands that push them away from “the generic characteristics of management”. Unlike their counterparts in non-service environments, they need to manage “both staff performance and guest expectations”. This juggling act is at its very best a manifestation of “transformational leadership”, or a process in which a leader influences an organisation’s members to change their attitudes and behaviour while building new levels of commitment to the organisation’s core values and goals.

How, then, could Australian hotel managers be assessed within the ambitious scope of transformational leadership? The researchers suggest that four main ethical systems could guide these managers in their decision making. The first, utilitarianism, aligns the achievement of goals and ends with the promotion of happiness. Rule ethics, in contrast, hold that actions “can only be moral if they are done from duty”.

Social contract ethics move decision making from the individual realm to that of the group, stressing that managers should recognise themselves as part of a whole that gives each of their actions a meaning. Personalistic ethics advances that position, suggesting that “individuals find their greatest meaning in their relationships to others rather than to an organisation or themselves alone”.

Moral Development of Leaders

With one or a combination of these systems in place, managers usually pass through stages of moral development beginning with the self-interested quest for reward and avoidance of risk and culminating in self-aware morality whereby ethical choices are independent of the organisation for which they work. The resultant leadership styles, argue the researchers, move from a basic manipulative approach to a bureaucratic, rule-bound style, on to the efficiency of professional management and finally to transformational leadership.

Given this range of personal development, the researchers posited that older managers who had more experience in the industry would rely most on transformational leadership. They also hypothesised that female managers would be more transformative in their leadership, and that the characteristics of the organisations in which all managers worked, such as size, annual turnover and age, would influence their leadership styles.

The Australian Setting

To draw information from the broadest possible group of managers, the researchers approached members of the Australian Hotels Association Residential Division in each state and the Hotel, Motel and Accommodation Association of Australia. All ninety-one managers who responded to their survey were from three-star or higher hotels, and their occupations ranged from supervisor to managing director.

Fifty-five per cent of these respondents were women, and their ages ranged from 19 to 58. The researchers identified four distinct levels of education amongst them: secondary school, technical college, undergraduate degree holders and postgraduate degree holders. The extent of their experience also varied widely, with periods of employment ranging from one to 13 years with the current employer.
In an evocative reconfiguration of the leadership styles discussed previously, the researchers renamed manipulative leadership as “Machiavellian”, and retained the bureaucratic, professional and transformational labels to classify other forms of leadership identified amongst the respondents.

**Emergence of Machiavellian Leadership Styles**

When analysing their data the researchers found that the desired transformational leadership style was being practiced, but not always in its most effective form. Also evident was a combined professional/transformational style. Of even more concern, however, was the emergence of two Machiavellian styles.

The first style combined equal parts of the Machiavellian and bureaucratic approaches, and the second was mainly Machiavellian “with a touch of bureaucratic style”. This, write the researchers, “may be related to the highly automated and bureaucratic nature of the hotel industry” wherein employees are usually required to conform with stated policies and adhere to procedure manuals. The Machiavellian and bureaucratic styles were popular amongst the respondents aged between 25 and 40.

However, the use of those styles did decline with age. Hotel managers between 25 and 40 were more likely to use the combined Machiavellian/bureaucratic style and far more likely to use the Machiavellian style with a touch of bureaucratic leadership than those aged 41 or over. It should be noted at this stage that Machiavellian leaders are, in the researchers’ words, “less ethical than other leaders”.

To compound these troubling results, the researchers found that gender and the characteristics of the organisations in which the managers worked had no bearing on their leadership styles. It seems that age alone determines whether of not Australian hotel managers lead ethically.

**The Problem of Youth**

The researchers suggest that the tendency toward Machiavellian and hence unethical leadership amongst young Australian hotel managers may be due to them “being less prepared to wait for promotion” than their older counterparts. This could lead to them seeing “manipulation as an acceptable tool by which to progress their career”.

Another possible factor in the predominance of unethical leadership styles amongst younger managers may simply be confidence. A lack of confidence at the beginning of a career could shift a manager towards a more autocratic style, but the researchers suggest that the relatively rapid disengagement from both Machiavellian and bureaucratic leadership with age dilutes any influential transformations of confidence.

The hospitality industry is based on voluntary exchange – between service personnel and guests, and within the group of service personnel itself. The researchers show that in Australia this easily disturbed environment is at risk from self-interested younger managers. “Current managers and other stakeholders interested in the long-term viability of their respective businesses” should take careful note, they warn.

**Points to Note**

- Hotel managers operate within distinct ethical, moral and leadership realms.
- The Machiavellian and bureaucratic leadership styles predominate amongst younger Australian hotel managers.
- Older managers tend to use more professional and transformative styles of leadership.
- Action is needed to ensure that self-interested younger managers do not disturb the hotel service environment.

Shopping Alone Not Enough for Mainland Visitors

Hong Kong’s tourism industry must offer mainland visitors more than just shopping opportunities, argues the SHTM’s Professor Cathy Hsu in a recently published co-authored research article. While not downplaying the significance of Hong Kong as a “shopping paradise”, the researchers show that also significant are the promotion of novel local attractions and a focus on the need for relaxation.

Significance of Mainland Tourism
One of the most important features of world tourism today is the rapid growth in outbound Chinese tourists. The researchers note that these people “are more likely to be young and middle-aged individuals, and most of them are well educated and earn a decent monthly income”. Industry stakeholders who understand how such travellers behave will have a distinct advantage as competition to attract tourist spending intensifies.

In a broader sense, given that half of all mainland travellers to Hong Kong in 2004 were repeat visitors, it is essential to understand what helps to shape a mainland visitor’s intention to return, because that intention is usually a precursor to an actual revisit.

To achieve this aim, the researchers set out to measure tourist motivation, the experience of visiting Hong Kong and perceived constraints on returning as autonomous factors influencing a revisit. These factors, they posited, would influence the attitude towards a revisit and the intention to actually revisit. It is important to highlight a subtle distinction here – an attitude is an emotional state and an intention is a prelude to action.

The researchers note that travel experience can influence attitude “both positively and negatively”, but most often influences revisit intention positively. Tourist satisfaction also, and understandably, has a positive influence on revisit intention. However, little attention has been paid to the link between tourist satisfaction and tourist attitude. The researchers thus separated the experience of having visited Hong Kong into just the fact that an outbound tourist had visited and overall satisfaction based on all visits.

Having considered these more positive elements of revisits, the researchers determined to account for “perceived constraints” against returning. Yet they also note that such constraints might affect an individual’s intention to return but not their attitude about revisiting.

A Beijing-Focused Study
The researchers targeted Beijing residents because the city is the largest long-haul mainland tourism market. After convening 3 focus groups with 23 of the city’s residents, they developed a questionnaire that was used in two pilot studies of around 200 respondents each. The final survey, conducted by telephone, involved 501 successful interviews.

Of the interviewees, just over half were women, just under half were aged between 20 and 29, approximately 60% were married and just over one third earned a monthly personal income of between RMB1,500 and RMB3,499. A word of caution is necessary about these income levels. The researchers write that “bonuses and irregular payments in addition to salary are common in China”. This, they note “could explain why a seemingly low income group of people can afford to travel”.

Generally Satisfied Visitors
Overall, the interviewees were “satisfied with their past experience of visiting Hong Kong”, had favourable attitudes towards visiting again and intended to do so in the future. Yet the intensity of the intention to revisit
varied between interviewees, suggesting that Hong Kong could lose the opportunity to attract some tourists outbound from Beijing.

Another interesting finding was that although a greater number of visits positively influenced the interviewees’ intention to return, it did nothing to change their attitudes about returning to Hong Kong. Rather, attitudes about returning were influenced by satisfaction with previous visits. Understandably, satisfaction also positively affected the intention to actually revisit.

The parallel importance of past visits and satisfaction creates an interesting scenario. The researchers note that the association of satisfaction with attitude suggests the importance of “emotional ties with the destination” based on a “general impression” of earlier experience. In contrast, the equally strong influence of past visits on revisit intention may reflect that revisits are “rational planned behaviour”. Knowing more about how these two behavioural dimensions influence revisits would be very useful to organisations such as the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

**Broadening the Revisit Experience**

Of immediate practical concern amongst the researchers’ findings is that visitors do not become less likely to seek out new experiences when they visit Hong Kong more. The expectation that tangible activities such as shopping become more appealing was not borne out by the interviewees’ responses. Although still very interested in shopping, the more experienced visitors were also motivated by the search for new attractions and the need to relax.

Because repeat visitors naturally find novelty elusive, the researchers suggest that destination marketers and managers should “engage in tourism development and marketing strategies” which make new experiences more accessible. For instance, as many of Hong Kong’s beaches and outlying islands are inaccessible without local knowledge, the Hong Kong Tourism Board could conduct a promotional campaign to highlight their novelty for mainland visitors.

Turning to relaxation, the interviewees were not looking for opportunities to do as little as possible but rather were keen to spend carefree time with people close to them while in Hong Kong. The researchers suggest that the Tourism Board could use marketing campaigns that feature “happy moments with family and friends and their joy of being away from daily problems”. They also mention a possible emphasis on “relaxing shopping environments”, bolstered by free shopping guides at major entry points and “a sufficient number of Mandarin-speaking retail service staff in areas frequented by mainland travellers”.

**Guarding Against Disinterest**

The researchers conclude with a caution – of all the possible revisit constraints, only disinterest was significant. Tourism industry stakeholders should pay attention to this situation because “repetition itself could lead to disinterest”. The objective should be to “foster sustainable visitation interest among visitors from mainland China”.

**Points to Note**

- Mainland Chinese repeat visitors are a cornerstone of the Hong Kong tourism industry.
- Generally, these visitors are satisfied with their experience of visiting Hong Kong.
- Novelty and relaxation should be promoted along with shopping to encourage revisits.
- The possibility of disinterest amongst repeat visitors should be combated to ensure sustainable revisit intention.

Understanding of Competitiveness Crucial to Hotel and Tourism Sectors

Tourism industry stakeholders, including government agencies, are in need of more refined measures of destination and hotel industry competitiveness, argue the SHTM’s Dr Henry Tsai, Professor Haiyan Song and Dr Kevin Wong in a review of related investigations published recently. Covering a broad spectrum of competitiveness research and specific studies of tourism and the hotel industry, the researchers show that existing models should be more practical for use in helping destinations to enhance their competitive advantages.

National Competitiveness
Beginning with the proposition that competitive advantage is crucial in the hospitality and tourism industry as it expands around the world, the researchers first focus on definitions of national competitiveness. These move from notions of countries jostling for position in the international marketplace to perspectives that incorporate both “the short- and long-run competitiveness of nations”.

The researchers also note a more recent school of thought that attributes economic competitiveness to firms alone, with international competitiveness depending on “firms in the country competing both in domestic and international markets”. In this sense, a nation’s competitiveness is determined by the accumulated competitiveness of the firms operating within its boundaries.

Also often considered significant in determining national competitiveness is “everything from national government policies and citizens’ attitudes to investments in infrastructure and manufacturing capability”. Some observers, the researchers note, have added consumer choice and industry productivity to this mix, but others warn of the inherent limits of considering competitiveness at all.

Destination Competitiveness
Given that “competitiveness remains a difficult concept”, the researchers narrow their focus to the level of tourist destinations, which can be seen as competitive simply if they can “attract and satisfy potential tourists”. Another important factor is sustainability. From this perspective, competitiveness is not an end but a means to the end of enhancing “the standard of living of the people in the destination under free and fair market conditions”.

A key concern amongst those who have taken this sort of people perspective also lies at the personal level – that customer satisfaction is an integral element of destination competitiveness. For this very reason it is difficult to benchmark destinations because “there are so many factors that influence the satisfaction levels of tourists”. However, the researchers point out that a broad set of determinants can be considered.

From the spectrum of previously considered factors the researchers narrow down the major determinants of destination competitiveness to a set of factors that will be of great interest to industry stakeholders. These include technology and infrastructure, human capital, price, the surroundings, openness, social development, human tourism, government, history and culture, the micro and macro environments, destination management in terms of marketing, demand conditions, customer satisfaction itself and social and psychological factors.

Hotel Industry Competitiveness
To isolate how these factors might be at work in a specific area of tourism, the researchers consider hotel industry competitiveness. Their first concern is the how the strategic decisions of each firm affect its competitiveness within the industry. They point to the perceived importance of resources, including human capital, technology and investment, flexibility
with a “diversified competitive action portfolio” and productivity broadly defined to include such indicators as efficiency, effectiveness, quality and predictability, amongst others.

The level of promotion undertaken by a hotel has also been considered a measure of competitiveness, note the researchers, because “hotels typically spend considerable amounts of their budgets on marketing activities”. They also point out that marketing oriented firms tend to “create value through providing goods and services geared towards consumers”.

In the hotel industry, this focus is very important given the tendency for customers to “stay loyal to a brand when they are satisfied with the quality of service that has been provided. Pricing also plays a crucial role in generating that loyalty, with services often similar between hotels of the same rating level.

A final set of considerations that should be of significance to the industry includes the effective use of information technology and central reservations systems, which can “create a competitive advantage”. Also significant are “environmental and energy related” costs, given that “after staffing costs, energy is one of the largest elements of expenditure” in most hotels. The researchers further mention the importance of strategic alliances, which can speed up access to “new markets, technology, knowledge and customers”.

Overall, hoteliers focused on their competitiveness should consider the importance they place on human capital, including staff education levels and training, and on technology, strategy, productivity, investment, service quality, brand image, strategic alliances, environmental operating costs, demand conditions, pricing, the physical characteristics of their properties and process management.

Coping with Change

Having considered the broad range of factors previously investigated, the researchers highlight the need for existing models of both destination and hotel competitiveness to be honed for use in different stages of development. In other words, industry stakeholders need tools that they can use to judge the effectiveness of their actions as the hospitality and tourism industry changes and grows.

At the highest level, there is a need to determine whether usual prescriptions to improve competitiveness, such as privatisation, are relevant. The researchers argue that in “large, emerging economies like China, scant evidence and reliable findings exist on the economic merits of the privatisation of the hotel sector”. They also point to resource concerns for hospitality firms, and the need for modified productivity measures as hotels move from a “rooms-only” to a “full-service” orientation.

Another possible change of focus would be to create more practical productivity measures by focusing on “the actual purchasing habits of the customer over time” rather than only accounting for “the physical assets of the hotel and its employees”.

Ultimately, advances in benchmarking are needed for a more practical understanding of “the ever-changing parameters, policies and institutional elements” in the hospitality and tourism industry. The goal should be to know, predict and enhance the competitiveness of all stakeholders in a destination.

Points to Note

- National competitiveness is a difficult concept to measure.
- Destination competitiveness hinges on customer satisfaction.
- Resource use, strategy, brand loyalty and cost reduction determine hotel competitiveness.
- The existing models of competitiveness should be refined for practical use within the industry.

Perceptions Ahead of Environmental Practice in Chinese Hotels

The ways in which Chinese hotel managers answer questions about environmental practice could be affected by “impression management”, according to the SHTM’s Professor Kaye Chon. In a co-authored article published recently, Professor Chon and his collaborators analyse the responses of hotel managers from environmental hotspots in China and find room to develop a more refined notion of good environmental practice.

Corporate Responsibility for the Environment
The concept of corporate social responsibility is closely aligned with environmental protection. Yet the researchers note that the intent to adhere systematically to an ethical framework of “alternate social and environmentally friendly practices” has been relatively subdued in China until recently. This, they point out, is problematic because the country is highly susceptible to environmental risk given its large population and rapid economic growth.

The government is very much aware of this situation and has introduced “better-implemented environmental regulations” over the last five years, linking them to sustainability and “increasing competitiveness”. The advent of “the green hotel concept” in the Chinese mainland during the late 1990s eventually led to the China National Tourism Administration implementing a nationwide “Green Hotel” standard in 2005. Yet even though such measures have enhanced the significance of environmental management, the researchers point to enduring criticism of the “hotel industry’s over-consumption of energy and water and of poor waste management practices”. A truly integrated practice of sustainable development incorporating ecological, social, cultural, political and technological elements has yet to emerge.

To what extent have sustainable practices been put to work in the Chinese hotel industry? The researchers mention that the internationally high levels of government ownership or control of hotels in China, and the relatively low levels of privately owned chain hotels, has meant that government regulations have had a significant effect. However, the number of hotels claiming to have environmentally friendly practices is substantially larger than the number in which specific practices are in place.

An Environmentally Troublesome Setting
This is hardly a sustainable situation, especially with increased levels of corporatisation and decentralisation in government-controlled hotels and the resultant “poorly defined patterns of authority”. The researchers thus sought to determine “the degree to which environmentally aware practices are being adopted” at hotels in locations experiencing environmental problems. The target locations had to be both tourist destinations and close to polluted lakes, which would increase the “external pressures for the adoption of environmental good practices as a partial expression of corporate social responsibility”.

The locations chosen all suffered from what the researchers describe as “serve forms of water pollution”. They surveyed 121 hotel managers, including 28 in Beijing close by Huairou Lake and Miyun Reservoir, 29 in Kunming close to Lake Dianchi, 32 in Shuzhou near Lake Tai and 32 in Wixu again near Lake Tai. The environmental problems ranged from excess nutrients causing algal blooms to high toxin levels, and the researchers understandably posited that the hoteliers would be well aware of “the need to adopt appropriate policies”.

Using a questionnaire that emphasised specific “environmental measures rather than overall strategic...
issues”, the researchers gathered important information on “perceptions of government enforcement of regulations and green practices in hotels”.

**Perceptions Outstrip Practice**
The most immediately significant finding is that the hotel managers considered an insistence on energy-saving light bulbs and the use of card-control systems to turn off lighting and air-conditioning in empty guest rooms was an adequate energy saving policy. They also perceived the benefit of staff training to reduce energy use, and thus costs. This focus on cost savings is a common justification for environmental policies, but the managers also perceived the importance of local governments enforcing energy saving and anti-pollution measures.

However, the researchers also mention that the responses to questions about “practices that caused potential pollution” were more positive than expected. In other words, even though their hotels were in environmentally threatened locations, the managers were not always worried about worsening the situation.

There was an overall slight agreement with the proposition that business could be harmed by pollution of the local environment, but the managers thought that staff turnover and poor regional promotion had a marginally greater impact on their businesses. They were nevertheless more aware of local environmental issues than, for instance, hoteliers in Hong Kong, largely because their locations made those issues difficult to avoid. Yet the researchers also note that there was a degree of scepticism about environmental issues in general, although this in turn was moderated to an extent by the belief that solutions could ultimately be found through “human ingenuity”.

**Impression Management**
As the managers were not entirely consistent in their responses, the researchers note that “the closer the data were examined, the more difficult it became to interpret” them. Yet two confounding patterns were apparent: one in which the questions measured “real attitudes” and a second in which the respondents’ personalities were at play, infusing the answers with scepticism, optimism and pessimism.

The results, caution the researchers, reflect “perceptions, which may not be actual practices”. Given the social and administrative pressures within the Chinese hotel industry, “impression management”, or the desire to offer socially and politically acceptable answers, “may be a key in understanding Chinese managers’ sensitivities”.

**Good Practice for the Future**
Still, this impression management could not mask an obvious enthusiasm for energy saving measures “where cost advantages are perceived”. The researchers thus suggest a “two-pronged approach to the generation of good practice”, combining energy saving initiatives and “a public policy that envisages penalties for poor practice”.

As concerns over environmental degradation in China begin to impinge “on the consciousness of management and possibly consumers to levels not previously experienced”, the researchers conclude that the “collective sensitivities that exist within Chinese culture” are likely to enhance responses to the ever-more pressing issues of environmental protection.

**Points to Note**
- China’s rapid development is creating significant environmental problems.
- Hotel managers are aware of the situation, but not always active in combating it.
- Impression management could explain why perceptions and practice diverge.
- A focus on energy-saving measures and penalties for poor practice will promote active environmental management in Chinese hotels.

Unevenness Revealed in Early Resident Support for Beijing Olympics

Beijing residents were mainly positive about the 2008 Olympics during the preparation stage, shows the SHTM’s Dr John Ap in a recently published co-authored research paper. Yet there were also minor but noteworthy reservations about some of the expected social-life impacts. Given the growing significance of such mega-events, the researchers suggest that public relations efforts and future preparation strategies be honed to ensure the informed and sustainable support of all stakeholders.

Understanding Mega-Events
With the growing significance of event tourism around the world, major sporting contests are becoming more alluring to host countries and cities. A good deal of attention has been paid to how such mega-events are marketed and managed, and to their economic effects, but little has been paid to their “social, cultural and environmental impacts”.

Not everyone experiences a major event in the same way, with differences in levels of economic development, socio-cultural factors and political systems as possible points of divergence between countries. The researchers suggest that developing countries such as China have major competitive disadvantages to overcome – such as the lack of sufficient infrastructure – which weigh heavily on perceptions of any events they host.

To combat this bias, the researchers take a “social representations” approach, accepting that mega-events occur “within a dynamic process of interaction and communication”. They focus on the “thinking society” in which individuals shape and are shaped by experience with similar events, the media and social interaction, whereby convention and memory can be more important than reason.

Beijing Residents Surveyed
Encouraging initial findings were that 92% of the interviewees “believed the Olympic Games would bring more positive than negative impacts” and that 96% indicated their overall support for the event. The latter finding echoes the 94% level of support for the Games expressed by Beijing residents in a survey conducted during 2001 by the Beijing Olympic Games Organising Committee.

Yet the researchers note that “similar impacts from other tourist development projects would normally evoke a more concerted negative reaction from the host community”. They suggest that a certain level of conformity may have been at work, with more positive answers chosen to “please the interviewers”. There is also a possibility that the Confucian tendency towards seeking consensus played a role in the responses.

The preparations for the 2008 Beijing Olympics provided an ideal testing ground for this approach, because the Games where viewed domestically “as a landmark that provides a means for narrowing the cultural distance between China and the outside world”. The researchers set out to identify residents’ attitudes and opinions towards the Games around two years before they were held, with the aim of providing organisers with insight into public concerns about the planning and preparation stages.
Regardless of such motives, it remains likely that there was a genuinely “high level of enthusiasm and support for the Olympic Games”. The researchers identified four main perceived impacts on Beijing. Social-psychological factors covered such concerns as bringing the community close together. Social life factors included worries about noise and damage to the natural environment. Urban development factors encompassed possible changes in the built environment, such as an improved city appearance. Economic factors took in increased business and employment opportunities.

**Embracers and Tolerators**

Within the general enthusiasm for the Games, the researchers detected an interesting split, with 88% of interviewees considered “embracers” and 12% considered “tolerators”. The embracers expressed “a high degree of favourable perceptions towards the Games”, and included both “optimistic embracers” and “embracers with reservations” who were slightly more concerned about social impacts and “valued the economic impacts less”. The tolerators, in contrast, were much more concerned about changes in social life “such as the Games’ disruption of residents’ tranquillity and the potential increase in crime”.

Other differences between the embracers and tolerators were their “satisfaction with government performance, their attitudes on tourists visiting Beijing, and work experience in the tourism industry”. Curiously, the tolerators were more likely than the embracers to have work experience in the tourism industry but were “less willing to see more tourists in Beijing”.

**Better Aligned Perceptions Crucial**

Given the generally positive perceptions of the Games and their impacts, the researchers suggest that Beijing residents could have “perceived that the Olympics would only affect their everyday lives to a limited degree”. Yet the small group of tolerators were clearly worried about exactly the same thing. Both of these reactions are likely to have been a result of too little public information being available during the planning and preparation stages of the Games, a point that future mega-event organisers should consider.

The researchers point out that widespread awareness of the extent to which a mega-event will affect the host society is a crucial consideration for event planners, because the success of their efforts is based to a certain extent on “every stake-holders’ active support and involvement”. Crucial to gaining that support would be specific messages targeted at both embracers and tolerators, encouraging the former to maintain enthusiasm and the latter to be more supportive.

From this perspective, a combination of “top-down and bottom-up development planning approaches” could better align residents behind mega-events. At the most basic level, this would involve “public seminars and consultations” to “involve residents in the planning process”.

The researchers conclude that differences in perceptions are always “worth bearing in mind”. So, too, are changes in perceptions over time. They are currently analysing the results of a follow-up study conducted one year after the event to determine just how lasting were the positive perceptions of the Olympics amongst Beijing’s residents.

**Points to Note**

- Residents’ perceptions of mega-events are rarely considered.
- Beijing residents overwhelmingly supported the Olympic Games.
- However, that support came from both ‘embracers’ and ‘tolerators’.
- Combining top-down and bottom up development approaches would help to remove such distinctions.

Tourism is considered a major contributor of greenhouse gas emissions, but how aware are individual tourists of the role they play, and how willing are they to change their behaviour? A large-scale, PolyU-funded international collaborative study, carried out by the SHTM in association with James Cook University (JCU) in Australia, is set to find out.

SHTM Professor Bob McKercher, Co-Principal Investigator of the study with Professor Bruce Prideaux of JCU, emphasised the overwhelming support the project has received. A total of 63 universities in 23 economies agreed to collaborate, returning nearly 3,000 surveys completed by tourism and hospitality students.

“International collaborative research in the area of tourism and the environment is scarce”, Professor McKercher explained. “Sixty-plus universities working together should produce some very interesting results that I think will set the benchmark for future research on climate change and tourism.”

The survey data were collected from February to June 2009, and preliminary results have been presented at several conferences, including the May 2009 UNWTO Ulysses Conference on Innovations in Education in Madrid.

Global warming and climate change emerged as the dominant global environmental concern amongst the students surveyed. Two-thirds of the students said they had changed their behaviour in the past three years to reduce their environmental impact.

Nearly 90% of the students believed tourism is possibly or definitely a major contributor to global warming and climate change. Yet, only 12% had altered their travel behaviour, suggesting that much can be done in this area.

Ms Sharon Pang, a Doctor of Hotel and Tourism Management student who is analysing the data as part of her studies, found that the male and female students differed significantly in their views, but that the attitudes of the male students were consistent across all economies, whereas the attitudes of the female students varied significantly by country of origin.

“Tourism and hospitality students are going to be key decision makers and key informants”, Professor McKercher noted. “Their attitudes and level of awareness are thus of great importance.” The next step, he said, is to follow up “this benchmark, baseline study” with more sophisticated research to further explicate its findings. “This is just the beginning of a, probably informal, global coalition looking at issues related to tourism and climate change.”

Climate Change
Under the Spotlight
Keenly aware that the surging demand for tourism in the mainland must be matched by a responsive pool of top-quality professionals, SHTM Associate Director Professor Cathy Hsu spoke to around 600 mainland programme students, prospective students, academics and industry leaders at the Shenzhen Polytechnic on 20 November. With a theme of service quality management in the hotel and tourism sectors, current BA in Hotel and Catering Management students, in particular, were treated to a vision of their future.

“Service employees are the service”, Professor Hsu stressed, noting that quality service gives customers an enduring sense of an organisation’s overall quality. She outlined four common misconceptions about quality that need to be overcome: the notions that quality equals higher costs, expense, luxury and reduced productivity.

Professor Hsu went on to explain that any service organisation, whether a quick-service outlet or a five-star hotel, can enhance quality at very little cost by knowing what customers expect, selecting the right service designs and standards to meet expectations, delivering those standards and matching performance promises.

Compared to goods, she said, services are characterised by intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and simultaneous production and consumption. As they are intimately involved in the service delivery process, it is very important to remember that “customers have choices!” The challenge, Professor Hsu emphasised, lies in getting customers to choose a service that they know will satisfy them.

Although different from customer satisfaction – which involves meeting customer wants, needs, expectations and perceptions of fairness – service quality directly affects it. Professor Hsu pointed to studies showing that customer satisfaction leads to customer retention, positive word of mouth and increased revenues. These determinants of survival and growth play crucial roles in shaping today’s competitive tourism landscape.

In short, quality service builds customer loyalty. Yet excellence never comes easily, and Professor Hsu noted that it takes years to build a service culture. Still, doing so is a challenge that SHTM students in the mainland are uniquely poised to meet.
Teaching Excellence Recognised

SHTM Instructor Ms Chloe Lau proudly accepted a President’s Excellence Award for Teaching 2008/09 at a ceremony held on 27 November in the Jockey Club Auditorium. One of only two recipients university-wide, Ms Lau received her award from PolyU President, Professor Timothy Tong. SHTM staff members have now been honoured with this prestigious award twice, reinforcing the School’s excellence in teaching.

A committed educator with a passion for helping students grow, Ms Lau has organised a broad range of learning experiences for her students, including study tours and participation in conference preparation and management, amongst other innovative approaches.

Her dedication is captured by a ‘CARE’ philosophy of Creating opportunities for participation and appreciation, using Appropriate approaches for different subjects, Reinforcing industry practice in the teaching setting and Encouraging critical thinking.

Ms Lau’s name and award title have been engraved on a plaque that will be displayed on campus for one year.

Research and Service Awards

Also honoured at the President’s Awards ceremony were Dr Wilco Chan and Dr Catherine Cheung, recipients of the Faculty/School Award for Excellence in Research and Faculty/School Award for Excellence in Service, respectively. They received the awards from Professor Albert Chan, Vice President (Research Development) and Chairman of the SHTM board.

The SHTM co-organised the 3rd UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook held in Guilin, China, on 15-17 November. SHTM Director Professor Kaye Chon gave important remarks at the opening ceremony, and SHTM Associate Director Professor Haiyan Song spoke at the plenary session on the “Impacts of the Economic Crisis on Tourism in Asia”. Dr Thomas Bauer presented a timely paper on “Climate Change and the Challenges of the Green Economy”.

Tourism Trends Discussed

The SHTM co-organised the 3rd UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook held in Guilin, China, on 15-17 November. SHTM Director Professor Kaye Chon gave important remarks at the opening ceremony, and SHTM Associate Director Professor Haiyan Song spoke at the plenary session on the “Impacts of the Economic Crisis on Tourism in Asia”. Dr Thomas Bauer presented a timely paper on “Climate Change and the Challenges of the Green Economy”.

In Brief...
Thought Leader Dialogue

Co-organised by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) and the SHTM, the Greater China Hospitality Thought Leaders Forum was held in Hong Kong on 25 November. Themed “Future Issues in Sales, Marketing and Revenue Management: What Keeps You Up at Night?” the forum included a talk by Dr David Jones on “Recognising the Current Global Economic Crisis”. Professor Haiyan Song gave a lunch presentation on “Current Trends and Future Prospects of the Hospitality Industry in Asia”.

Pearl River Delta Tour Guide Seminar

Dr Alan Wong was a keynote speaker at the Pearl River Delta Tour Guide Seminar held in Hong Kong on 18-19 September. An Honorary Advisor to the Hong Kong Association of Registered Tour Co-ordinators (HARTCO), Dr Wong spoke about “The Port Lecturer Programme for the Cruise Industry”. The seminar attracted more than 100 tour guides from Hong Kong, Macau, Zhuhai and Guangzhou.

Staff Update

Ms Annabel Chan has joined the SHTM as Programme Manager (Chinese Mainland). Her duties include managing the School’s activities and programmes in the Chinese mainland, liaison with mainland partners, recruiting students from the mainland to Hong Kong programmes, alumni activities in the mainland and other Chinese mainland-related activities as assigned by the Director of the School.

Mr Henry Tsui, previously an Assistant Designer at the SHTM, has been a Designer since 1 November.

Mr Ning Siu Ping Andy joined the SHTM as Assistant Technical Officer of the Millennium Training Restaurant in November. He provides day-to-day technical support for classes, undertakes administrative duties including workplace health and safety, handles food stock and supervises support staff.

Ms Angela Bo Yu, General Manager of the Jinling Resort, studied at the SHTM from September to November. The latest Jinling Holding Group executive to spend time at the SHTM with a view to gaining an international perspective on the MICE industry, Ms Bo received a certificate of achievement from Professor Chon on 1 December. She remarked that her time with the School gave her “many opportunities to communicate with MICE experts” and allowed her visit “the best Exhibition Centre in Asia”. The experience would definitely benefit her career in the future, she said.

Mr Cheung Tien Wai, Tim has joined the SHTM as Assistant Officer of the Che-woo Lui Hotel and Tourism Resource Centre. He assists in planning and managing the daily operations of the Centre, handling enquiries, updating and maintaining the existing website and in-house databases, and organising publicity activities.

Reflections from Jinling Resort

Ms Angela Bo Yu, General Manager of the Jinling Resort, studied at the SHTM from September to November. The latest Jinling Holding Group executive to spend time at the SHTM with a view to gaining an international perspective on the MICE industry, Ms Bo received a certificate of achievement from Professor Chon on 1 December. She remarked that her time with the School gave her “many opportunities to communicate with MICE experts” and allowed her visit “the best Exhibition Centre in Asia”. The experience would definitely benefit her career in the future, she said.
The SHTM is pushing ahead with MICE initiatives. Following the School’s launch of a pioneering BSc(Hons) in Convention and Event Management conversion programme this year, a new MICE training centre and the achievements of students are highlighting an enthusiasm for excellence in this growing field.

Training Centre a First for Region

The SHTM joined forces with Meeting Professionals International (MPI) on 16 October to launch the region’s first MPI Global Training Centre on the PolyU campus. The new Centre will offer basic, intermediate and advanced certificates to MICE professionals at different stages of their careers.

“Meetings and conventions are fundamental components of a robust hospitality and tourism industry”, said SHTM Director and Chair Professor Kaye Chon. The new training centre, he noted, would ensure that “the School is positioned to lead the development of the industry’s future leaders”.

MPI boasts more than 24,000 members internationally and has training centres in the US, Canada, France, Qatar and, now, Hong Kong. Chief Development Officer Didier Scaillet said that the SHTM’s “many years of hospitality and event management education experience” made it “a perfect fit” with his organisation’s goal of providing hands-on professional education at the local level.

The Training Centre will be launching a week long Global Certificate in Meetings and Business Events programme for industry professionals in the near future.

SHTM Students Shine at ICCA Congress

Two outstanding BSc Hotel Management students, Chloe Ho and Sandy Hui, recently represented the SHTM at the 48th ICCA Congress in Florence, Italy in November. Ms Ho and Ms Hui were amongst four students worldwide to win the ICCA’s first-ever Education Fund scholarship by writing an essay and preparing a video clip on “Meetings of the Future”.

In addition to gaining valuable industry knowledge and exploring the many cultural delights of Florence, the students took part in panel discussions on what will influence future meetings and whether the industry is sending the right messages to educators and students.

Both students expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to network with industry professionals and gain practical, hands-on experience. “I can now match the theoretical knowledge learnt in school with practical experience”, Ms Hui said.

Ms Ho concurred, also emphasising her newfound appreciation for “the entire conference process and behind-the-scene logistics”. She now knows for sure that “the MICE industry is really challenging and exciting!”
The SHTM’s students are out of the ordinary. Their inquisitiveness, creativity, innovation and pursuit of excellence shine through, as recent and ongoing activities attest.

**Korea Trip Provides Context for Learning**

A group of five students from the Convention Venue Management course had the valuable opportunity of putting their classroom learning into context during a visit to three venues in South Korea on 9-12 September. On the agenda were the Busan Exhibition and Convention Centre, the Changwon Exhibition and Convention Centre (CECO) and the COEX Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Accompanied on the trip by academic staff members Dr Jinsoo Lee, Ms Chloe Lau and Ms Alice Chan, the students were particularly excited to discover that CECO’s marketing manager is an SHTM alumnus.

During informative and lively discussions with the manager, the students learned that the five-year old venue has allowed Changwon to “capture the full economic benefit of attendees and meeting planners” through its location adjacent to such facilities as a hotel, an eight-storey shopping mall, offices and apartments.

**Halloween Design a Winner**

A team of students from the Attractions Management course were honoured with first prize in Ocean Park’s Halloween Bash Haunted House Design Competition last year. Their ‘Purgatory Express’, used during the theme park’s Halloween celebrations, won them a nine-day trip to the Haunted Attraction National Tradeshow and Convention in Milwaukee, USA.

Michelle Chau, who with teammate Winston Li created the award-winning concept, said she particularly relished applying classroom theory: “provide something relevant to the market you serve is a theory we learnt in Attractions Management. We chose the MTR, which is familiar to locals, and distorted it into the Purgatory Express for a horrifying effect”.

Working with the Ocean Park team was also invaluable, Michelle said: “I now recognise that creativity, critical thinking and detailed planning are of critical importance in the entire industry”.

From left to right: Ms Michelle Chau, Mr Winston Li and SHTM Instructor Mr Joey Wu
Rooftop Farming

SHTM Hotel Management students took a novel approach to foodservice entrepreneurship in November with PolyU’s first rooftop farm. Aware of the increasingly limited space in urban areas and the need to explore environmentally friendly solutions, the students were tasked with developing a complete foodservice chain approach. Their experimental plot between the Shaw Sports Centre and the Fong Shu Chen Building grew selected herbs, vegetables and fruit in pots and hanging baskets.

Working in a kitchen has always been thought of as a hot, demanding and a stressful job. Students completing the BSc in Hotel Management programme have to find out whether this really is true by showing their skills and knowledge in the areas of both food and beverage production and restaurant management.

During their Food and Beverage Operations I course, students are gradually introduced to kitchen operations through classes that teach practical and management skills. This process cumulates in a final practical exam in which they are given a set time to prepare, cook and present a food item for an à la carte menu. The students are assessed not only on their practical ability but also on their time management and organisational skills.

This is a very important point, because it is those skills that students are expected to develop in further food and beverage classes as they progress through their studies. They will also need them honed and ready when entering the workforce. The ability to manage time and structure a time plan that takes into account the specific item to be prepared allows the use of knowledge when working either individually or in a team during a management operation, regardless of where the individual is located in a hotel or related hospitality businesses.

Time management and organisation is both a challenge and a true student achievement. Food and beverage is an exciting area of work in any hotel, and the SHTM strives to show students that it is not all blood, sweat and tears.
Each semester, SHTM students with GPAs of 3.7 or above receive Student Achievement Awards. On 29 October last year, 55 outstanding students attended an Elite of the Elite presentation ceremony at the Millennium Training Restaurant.

The SHTM would like to extend its congratulations to those students who excelled during semesters two and three 2008/9:

**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management**
- CHAN Kwok Yee Gloria
- CHEUNG Wing Yin
- CHOI Hing Ying
- HU Kewei
- HO Tung Lok
- LEUNG Nga Yin Fiona
- LEUNG Pui Chung
- LI Ting
- LI Xiuxi
- LIANG Yinghui
- LO Ami
- PENG Xiaxi

**BSc(Hons) in Tourism Management**
- FUNG Kam Ting
- KWOK Wenz
- LEI Elkie
- LEUNG Chung Yan
- OLIVER Kathleen Mary
- TO Wing Ki
- TSE Ka Yu
- TUEN Chun Tung
- YAN Kam Shan
- YIP Hon Ming

**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management (Conversion)**
- WONG Pui Chu
- WONG Pui Fong

**BSc(Hons) in Hotel Management (Conversion)**
- CHENG Ka Ying Stephanie
- CHOW Hay Man
- CHU Pak Ying Connie
- LEUNG Yiu Chung
- TSE Ka Yan
- WONG Ho Ki
- YAN Lai Yee

**Higher Diploma in Hotel Management**
- LEE Yuk Ho
- LEUNG Mei Wun
- MAN Emily
- NG Wai Fung
- WONG Ho Yan

**Higher Diploma in Tourism Management**
- AU Ting-chi
- CHENG Yi Ting
- HUNG Siu Ying
- KWOK Sheung Yi
- LAU Yuen Tung Connie
- LEE Wai Yin
- MAK Chi Hang
- SO Choi Man
- SO Wai Ki
- TANG Yi Ka
- YAU Tsz Yan
- YIP Che Wai
- YU Fei Man

**BA(Hons) in Hotel and Catering Management**
- CHENG Yi Ting
- HUNG Siu Ying
- KWOK Sheung Yi
- MAK Chi Hang
- SO Choi Man
- SO Wai Ki
Memorable Moments Shared By All

The SHTM Alumni Association has been as busy as ever over the last six months, networking, sharing memorable moments and making a difference in the community. Read on for the highlights...

Time in the Community

Tai Po was the scene of an important volunteer effort on 5 September when more than 40 members of the Alumni Association held a Community Day at the Hong Chi Pinehill Integrated Vocational Training Centre. The alumni spent time with intellectually disadvantaged students who are being trained to work in the hospitality industry. A series of activities with the students provided a valuable experience for all.

New Venue Honour

Around 100 alumni members, industry partners and faculty members gathered on 15 October for a Happy Hour Gathering at Traders, a recently opened Italian and Japanese restaurant at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. Association External Affairs Secretary, Mr Benson Tang, said that “we were so honoured to be able to hold a function there” as the Association was one of the first groups to do so.

Chocolate Delight at Azure Restaurant

Gathering at Hotel LKF in Central on 15 November, Association members and their families spent an afternoon sipping tea and making chocolate at Azure Restaurant, described by Tatler magazine as Hong Kong’s best in 2008. Aside from the tea and delicious snacks, participants were treated to a chocolate making adventure with the restaurant’s chef. It was, said Mr Tang, a “fun activity”.

Christmas Cheer

Association members experienced a change of scene on 17 December with a Christmas Wine Dinner at the Hong Kong Jockey Club in Happy Valley. The well-attended dinner just a week before Christmas featured a six-course menu with seven wines of different styles at one of the facility’s newly renovated restaurants. Led by a renowned wine expert, members learned about complimentary food-wine pairings that brought out the distinct flavours of each dish. This was a time to relax, have fun and enjoy the finer things in life!

Member Get Member Programme

As the new year gathers pace, now is a perfect time for all Association Members to join the Member Get Member Programme. All members who recruit two or more new members receive fantastic rewards. This is an exciting opportunity to expand the Association and the SHTM’s Alumni network. Further information is available at http://www.acad.polyu.edu.hk/~hmweb/shtmaa/.
**Alum-notes**

**1990s**

Ms Haylis Cheung Kwai Wan HD 1992 received an MA in Strategic Hospitality Management from Middlesex University-Hendon in 2008. She is currently Director and Group General Manager – Sales and Marketing of the OYC Hotel Group.

Mr Kan Chung BA 1992 is General Manager of the Harbourview Hong Kong Hotel.

Ms Veronica Chan BA 1994 is General Manager – Commercial of Club Med (Hong Kong) Limited.

Mr Ronnie Leung BA(Hons) 1998 is a Manager at Hoi King Heen, part of the InterContinental Grand Stanford Hong Kong. Since 2005 he has also been a Sector/Subject Specialist with the Hong Kong Council for the Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications.

**2000s**

Mr Henry Law HD 2002 is Catering Manager of the Royal Garden.

Mr James Hwang HD 2004 is Assistant Front Office Manager at the Peninsula Hong Kong.

Ms Linda Yu MSc 2006 is Director of Sales for Hullett House.

Mr Percy M Ngwira BA(Hons) 2007 was the first SHTM BA student from Africa. He is the Regional Tourism Standards Inspector with the Zambian Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, and founder and CEO of Peco Travel Tours.

Ms Daisy Wong BA(Hons) 2007 is Assistant Contracting Manager of the Hotelbeds Accommodation and Destination Service, part of the TUI Travel PLC Group. She is currently in charge of contracting hotels in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Ms Hiroko Kobayashi MSc 2008 is Planning and Public Relations Officer at Okura Hotels and Resorts in Japan.

Ms Ami Lo BSc(Hons) 2009 is an Account Executive at Impact Asia, providing PR services and event planning and production to clients in many countries.

Ms Chung Po Lam Shirley BSc(Hons) 2009 is a PSO and Control Assistant for Thai Airways International.

Ms Macy Ng BSc(Hons) 2009 is undertaking a one year training programme with the Human Resources Department of the Landmark Mandarin Oriental.

Mr Squall Song BA 2009 is Assistant Training Manager at the Kerry Centre Hotel in Beijing.

Ms Winnie Wong BSc(Hons) 2009 is undertaking a one year training programme with the Rooms Department of the Landmark Mandarin Oriental.
Many Thanks to Our Professors for a Day

The SHTM offers its heartfelt thanks to the distinguished industry professionals who recently served as professors for a day.

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<td>Chairman, Hong Kong Wine Limited</td>
<td>Wines from Europe</td>
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<td>Mr William CHAN</td>
<td>Deputy General Manager in Distribution and Planning, Hong Kong Express</td>
<td>The Introduction of ATLA, Designation and Capacity Allocation; Government Policy and Slot Clearance; Change of Business Model, from a ‘Feeder’ Carrier to a Regional Carrier; New Route Development, Hong Kong Express Opportunities and Challenges; Hong Kong Express Long Term Plan Including Freighter and Passenger Long Haul Operation</td>
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<td>Mr Eric CHOU</td>
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<td>Airline Labour Relations</td>
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<td>Mr Coleman CHUI</td>
<td>Director of Human Resources, Four Seasons Hotel, Hong Kong</td>
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<td>Mr Nixon CHUNG</td>
<td>Managing Director, Camloy International Limited</td>
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<td>Mr Anthony COSTA</td>
<td>General Manager, Landmark Oriental Hotel</td>
<td>Challenges of Managing a Luxury Hotel in Today’s Environment</td>
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<td>Dr CUI Fengjun</td>
<td>Deputy Director, Zhejiang Provincial Development and Reform Commission</td>
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<td>Redevelopment of The Dragon from a Financial Perspective</td>
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<td>Mr Nigel A. SUMMERS</td>
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<td>Mr Ricky YEUNG</td>
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| 24 March 2010| SHTM Career Day, Hong Kong                                           | SHTM                                                                         | Tony Tse  
Email: hmttse@polyu.edu.hk |
| 4-5 May 2010 | International Convention and Expo Summit, Singapore                  | SHTM and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Singapore Campus)               | Joy Kang  
Email: ICESprogram@unlv.edu.sg  
Website: www.unlv.edu.sg/ices2010 |
| 7-9 May 2010 | Asia Tourism Forum 9th Biennial Conference on Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Asia: Development, Marketing and Sustainability, Hualien, Taiwan | Taiwan Hospitality and Tourism College, Jinwen University of Science and Technology, and SHTM | Ming-huei Lee  
Email: mhlee@mail.tht.edu.tw  
Kaye Chon  
Email: hmkchon@polyu.edu.hk  
Website: http://atf2010.tht.edu.tw |
| 3-6 June 2010| 8th Asia Pacific CHRIE (APacCHRIE) Annual Conference, Bangkok, Thailand | Asia Pacific CHRIE                                                           | Manat Chaisawat  
Email: manat@phuket.psu.ac.th  
Website: www.apacchrie2010.org |
| 6-8 July 2010| 9th Asia Pacific Forum for Graduate Students’ Research in Tourism, Beppu, Japan | Graduate School of Asia Pacific Studies, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University | Malcolm Cooper  
Email: cooperm@apu.ac.jp |
| 13-16 July 2010| 16th APTA Annual Conference, Macau SAR, China                          | Asia Pacific Tourism Association (APTA)                                      | Yeong-hyeon Hwang  
Email: dryeong@dau.ac.kr  
Website: www.apta.asia |
| 28-29 September 2010| 4th International Forum on China Hotel Brand Development, Nanjing, China | SHTM and Jinling Hotels and Resorts Corporation | Qu Xiao  
Email: hmqxiao@polyu.edu.hk |
As one of the leading hospitality and tourism schools in the world, the School of Hotel and Tourism Management is a global centre of excellence for the 21st century. The School is ranked No. 2 in the world among academic institutions in hospitality and tourism based on research and scholarship, according to the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research in November 2009.

With a faculty of 60 academic staff drawn from 18 countries, we offer innovative teaching in a creative learning environment. Our programmes are highly sought after because students cherish the opportunity to study in a multi-cultural environment and to learn from an internationally renowned faculty whose programmes provide outstanding career opportunities.

BUILD YOUR CAREER MOMENTUM with a master’s or doctoral degree in Hotel & Tourism Management

Our taught postgraduate programmes offer a flexibility mode of study which allows you to set your own individual pace in progressing through the programme. You can complete your degree in either full-time or part-time mode. The international nature of our student body also stimulates networking opportunities for students.

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The DHTM programme has been designed for industry executives and academics to meet their needs. The programme prepares graduates to advance their careers by developing innovation, creativity and needed research skills within an Asian context.

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Find out more about the taught postgraduate programmes offered by the School of Hotel and Tourism Management by visiting:

MSc – www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/msc
DHTM – www.polyu.edu.hk/htm/dhtm

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The School is a Centre in the United Nations World Tourism Organisation Education and Training Network.

Where Innovations in Hospitality Enrich World Experiences