

CONFERENCE REPORT

Annual EuroCHRIE Conference Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 25-28 October 2010

The 28th annual EuroCHRIE Conference was an exciting mix of high quality presentations, memorable events, key note speakers, and industry professionals. It took place in Amsterdam from 25-28 October, 2010 and was hosted by Saxion Hospitality Business School and Stenden International Hotel Management. The organisers wished and achieved to create an open and friendly atmosphere for academics, researchers and professionals, thus allowing them to engage in discussion and debate. Over 250 delegates gathered at the Mövenpick hotel to discuss the latest trends in hospitality and tourism. The Conference constituted an excellent opportunity to encourage academic and professional cooperation.

The Conference included contributions where innovation and new ways of knowing played an important role and also contributions related to the main theme of the conference, i.e. "Passion for Hospitality Excellence". As it was highlighted in the initial call for abstracts, *"Excellence in hospitality deals with many issues, like customer experience, employee satisfaction, and high quality standards; it requires an inclusive view for the use of space, the delivery of services, the building and maintaining of relations, and the responsible application of resources to generate value. These issues present a number of challenges for education, research, and business practice"*.

In total, more than 115 research papers were presented during the concurrent sessions. The presentations covered many issues, thus creating pleasant dilemmas to delegates about selecting one topic and presenter over another. The conference attracted a highly diversified and multidisciplinary academic audience and was managed so as to ensure co-related papers were grouped cognitively covering, among others, the following thematic pillars:

1. Management issues (destination management, operations management, service quality, hotel development, food and beverage health issues);



2. Education and human resource management (education curriculum, testing and assessment, recruitment, employees characteristics, career development, intercultural perspectives in HRM);
3. Marketing (marketing and positioning strategies, destination branding, customer loyalty, customer behaviour and motivation);
4. Strategic issues in tourism and hospitality (strategic choices, sustainability, finance and performance, guest experience, crisis management);
5. Philosophy and knowledge (problem based learning, knowledge diffusion and management);
6. Latest trends in tourism and hospitality (special interest tourism, the role and impact of social media, mobile tourism).

The Conference also included four inspiring and stimulating keynote speakers; Prof. C. Santing put hospitality in its historical perspective and explored the concept of hospitality business within the context of sincere charity on one side and the earning of money on the other. Mr. H. Driem, Managing Director of the Holland Business Promotion Office, discussed the issue of destination branding, stating that “... *destinations are not discovered anymore, but they are created*” and presenting the 7 P’s of destination marketing: product, place, promotion, price, personal, permanent consisted public/private cooperation and ... passion! Mr. M. Levie, CEO of the innovative, award winning citizenM hotel group, elaborated on the issue of innovation in hospitality and commented on the needs and wishes of travellers that desire “*affordable luxury*”. Mr. L. Frankenhuis, chairman of the PAN Parks foundation, presented his vision for sustainability, wilderness protection and tourism. PAN Parks is the only European-wide organization focusing on the protection of wilderness areas that applies a truly integrated approach combining wilderness protection and sustainable tourism development.

A stimulating events program supplemented the conference presentations and key-note speeches, offering great opportunities for enjoyment, rich social interaction and networking. The Opening Ceremony, Receptions, and the Gala Dinner enhanced the experience of attendees. Moreover, the “Amsterdam Experience” featured tourist highlights of Amsterdam. Delegates could choose among the “Heineken Experience”, i.e. a visit at the company’s facilities offering a true taste of Consumer Experience Tourism, and a tour at one of the main tourist attractions of the city: the famous Red Light district. Definitely, the city of Amsterdam constituted an ideal destination to hold a tourism conference, considering the great tourism traffic and development it experiences. Quite apart from these, it should be noted that the University

students that worked for the Conference exceeded themselves in order to cater for delegates and contributed greatly to creating an absolutely professional and hospitable atmosphere.

An important part of the conference was the awards ceremony. This year the winner of Emerald Award was M. Davidson and the winner of the Student Award was F. Aubke. EuroCHRIE Institute of Hospitality Education Research Award was given to the topic of “Strengthening Curriculum through Student Learning Outcome Assessment in Experiential Learning”, which was presented by S. Dressler, K. Cedercreutz, and A. Pacheco. EuroCHRIE Industry Award went to the host hotel: Mövenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre. EuroCHRIE Laureate Hospitality Award winner was P. Race and EuroCHRIE Nestlé Pro Gastronomía Award winner was G. Ortiz. Finally, EuroCHRIE President's Award was presented to Ron Carpenter, former president of EuroCHRIE.

Overall, we could say that it was an outstanding conference that significantly elevated expectations for the next (29th) EuroCHRIE conference. EuroCHRIE 2011 will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia from 19-22 October with main theme: “Tourism and Hospitality, Drivers of Transition”. The hosts are the American College of Management and Technology (www.acmt.hr) and the Rochester Institute of Technology (www.rit.edu). If you would like to know more details about EuroCHRIE 2011, please visit <http://www.eurochrie2011.hr/>.

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