

Marketing Management for the Hospitality Industry: A Strategic Approach, by Allen Z. Reich Wiley, 1997. Pp. 530. AUSS119.95, ISBN 0-471-31012-3.

Billed as the 'only advanced marketing textbook specifically focused on the hospitality industry...' this comprehensive volume is likely to catch the eye of many people in industry and academic circles. What differentiates this book from the many existing marketing texts is its emphasis on strategy and its role in the context of the hospitality industry. The stated larger audience is a broad one, from industry practitioners in operations, marketing functions and the corporate office as well as students across a range of levels. This is a bold endeavour that certainly goes some way to achieving its objectives and takes an academic approach to the subject that is well researched and referenced.

The book sets out with a clear introduction and outline of its structure, which highlights the key strategic concepts, models and definitions. The reader is also introduced to the thematic example of the Bryan House and City Grill that runs at the end of each of the eleven chapters. This case study approach clearly shows the sequential development of a detailed marketing strategy. Each step is clearly linked to the relevant chapter and culminates in a well-structured annotated sample strategic marketing plan for the food service establishment.

The remaining chapter structure will be familiar to anyone who has read general strategic management literature. The first topic encountered briefly reviews the structure and role of mission statements. The text moves on to marketing information systems and marketing research. It develops an increasingly tactical approach in the review of the research elements with topics on scaling and sampling. A more strategic approach is adopted in the following two chapters which cover the internal and external environments respectively. The latter chapter includes the issue of environmental analysis (an area of excellence at Virginia Polytechnic – the author's base). Under the review of technology there is no mention of the growing strategic impact on the industry from innovations such as global reservations, Internet, electronic commerce and smart cards. The author implies that technology is something to be aware of but it is not a strategic driver. From a strategic marketing perspective little could be further from the truth. The current industry direction is increasingly technology led through such things as sophisticated direct marketing approaches enabled by database technology, data mining and data warehousing. The appendix at the end of the chapter lists many potential sources of external environmental data but does not mention electronic data sources available through the World Wide Web.

The following chapter on strategic analysis uses a one-tool approach through SWOT analysis and no mention is made of any other approach. The next two sections also adopt a traditional path, covering strategic decision-making through grand strategies, product life cycles and a critical review of the BCG matrix followed by the crucial step of positioning. At this point the reader may wish to question the inclusion of a chapter on objectives that may logically have come earlier. In the penultimate chapter the focus is very much on marketing and follows the accepted but tired conventional wisdom of the more tactically biased area of the 'four Ps' it would seem that the need to satisfy the broad target audience is the reasoning for the inclusion of some less strategic issues, but a more updated view on the elements of marketing would be helpful, for example taking a relationship approach. The last chapter briefly covers issues of structure, management and control and these areas warrant more depth and could have been the vehicle for a more substantial conclusion. The book covers the material thoroughly and addresses the topics in the context of industry in a relevant

way. The book is well written, but it is striking that there is little new, and that is a lost opportunity. The text directs its audience to yesterdays' solutions for today's problems. Perhaps Reich is attempting to establish the principles of the approach rather than their current application yet most chapters do give a series of industry examples that evidences a more applied approach.

It is ironic how often books on marketing do not fulfil their exhortations and this is a case in point. The book's layout is worthy but dull and the use of a more visually stimulating approach would certainly be beneficial.

This book, as with the great majority of marketing-based texts, has a clear level of cultural bias towards the North American market. There is little attention to a more global perspective, with a result that the text is less accessible than it might have been for an international audience.

Despite the previous reservations, this is a good detailed general text that goes a long way to integrate much of the existing strategy and marketing literature into the hospitality context. Any addition in this still under-researched field is to be welcomed. The book is more likely to appeal to students or academics in the field rather than practitioners. Lecturers will find the end of each chapter very useful in framing questions for discussion; and project topics.

It can be difficult to identify clearly the differences between where the traditional approach towards strategic management ends and a differentiated strategic marketing begins. Add this to the issue of mixing tactical aspects of marketing with strategic issues and the risk of confusion is increased; nevertheless Reich has gone for the full mix and with some success. Overall, for anyone looking for a text that covers the key marketing areas, addresses a strategic perspective and links the whole into the context of the hospitality industry through some useful examples and an integrative case, this text is a buy.

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State of the Art Marketing Research, by A.B. Blankenship and George Edward Breen. Chicago, IL: American Marketing Association, 1995. Pp. xi + 579. US\$44.95. ISBN 0-8442-3457-5.

Managers and researchers in all types of service business will find this comprehensive presentation of the marketing research process useful. It provides a detailed examination of managerial needs for research information, the ways this information is gathered and developed, and the ways managers can use research information in their decision-making tasks. It is not intended to replace specialised books describing telephone or mail surveys; nor is it a how-to manual for focus group moderators. Rather, Blankenship and Breen review most of the marketing research procedures from the point of view of a manager, dealing with such questions as how to hire research providers, how to get the most out of working with them, and how to evaluate the quality of their work.

The book contains three sections. The first introduces the basic concepts of systematic marketing research and the methods for gathering information. The second section presents the elements of the research study so familiar to teachers of marketing research: defining the problem, preparing the research plan and proposal, choosing data collection methods, summarising and presenting the results. This section is a thorough review of these topics from the point of view of the ultimate user of the