



OPINION ARTICLE

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Are you prepared to be a “Top Ten” Player in Your Hospitality Marketplace or are you going to continue to be one of the “other” statistics?

Consulting Insights from
HospitalityEducators.com

By **John Hogan, CHA CHMS CHE CHO**

5 min read

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The Need for Clearly Defined and Understood Mission, Values and Principles has never been greater.

The most recent global recession set another wave of ownership changes, lender foreclosures, brand mergers (or disappearances) and the final outcome





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In my career as a hotelier and hospitality educator. I have had the opportunity to see many different kinds of business models. As a consultant and workshop leader, I have interacted with literally hundreds (if not thousands) of organizations ranging from Bed & Breakfasts to Conference Centers to huge Convention Centers and hotels, as well as many Convention & Visitors' Bureaus and regional and national hospitality associations. While almost all have the best intentions, I have come to realize the ones that have the best ongoing track record are the ones who regularly look at themselves on who they, who they serve, why they exist and how they will evolve going forward.

"A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be."

Abraham Maslow (1908 – 1970)



hospitalitynet™ times can better
ants or external

resources when we observe their interactions and impact on businesses other than their own.

With that in mind, let me share an example. My daughter and her family enjoy the natural surroundings and ongoing improvements in the Cincinnati Nature Center. When I recently visited them, I noted that the Center's Newsletter had a very succinct one page recap of their Mission, their values and their Principles.

The Center, founded in the mid 1960s, is considered a "top 10 nature center" in the US, with more than a dozen miles of trails and 1600 acres, serving thousands of members and school children every year. Their mission is to inspire passion for nature and promote environmentally responsible choices through experience, education, and stewardship to ensure a sustainable future.

The Cincinnati Nature Center challenged its Board of Trustees Education Committee to clarify its strategic direction in fall 2009. The new approach placed strong emphasis on the nature center community and on an ethic of mentor-ship and social influence among three key audiences: CNC adult members, children and school teachers/community mentors. Online research showed that creating another three-year strategic plan was not enough to move ahead as they were inspired to do. This research showed the Board that they still lacked the clarity of exactly who they serve and where they could be best. The online narratives relate that the Nature Center initially



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resources would greatly

assist their efforts to both focus on the future while serving people today..

My research stated the outside resource selected began leveraging the good work already completed by the internal group and the ongoing collaborations allowed the Nature Center to drill down into what really mattered to their mission. Together they refined their Strategy Map identifying key goals and priorities, which led to a Balanced Scorecard to keep the team focused on the right activities. The team was then able to focus on what was really important, and align people to take action to intentionally further the organization's mission. The web site for the outside resource said the work they and the Nature Center did together didn't fundamentally change the mission of the organization, but that it did transform how effective they are in delivering that mission. The new focus is a constant reminder to the team of their goal to engage members.

The Cincinnati Nature Center has done an excellent job in defining its' goals, its' purpose and direction and how it intends to continue to be a "Top Ten" in its competitive set. Below are the specifics of what they state to be their Mission, Values and Principles. As a consumer, I think they are right on target. As a consultant, I salute them for their innovation and focus.

Cincinnati Nature Center

Our Mission

TO ENRICH LIVES BY INSPIRING PASSION FOR NATURE

What We Believe

- **Power of COMMUNITY**--We encourage people to see themselves as part of a community of nature enthusiasts within the community of nature. CNC embraces Aldo Leopold's definition of community, which "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively the land."
- **RESPECT for All Life**--We show respect for all living things by seeking to understand, by celebrating diverse viewpoints, and by acting with kindness and empathy.
- **Personal EXPERIENCE**--There is no substitute for being IN nature. We maintain our lands for maximum biodiversity to provide unique personal experiences and education. Frequent experiences in nature are critical to the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health of all people.
- **STEWARDSHIP of the Land**--We recognize the interdependence of all living things and strive to maintain the web of life by preserving, restoring, and protecting our land. We embrace Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." A Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold 1949.
- **Commitment to SUSTAINABILITY**--We make choices that are environmentally responsible,



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anization, our region
and the earth.

OUR PRINCIPLES

How We Behave

- **Provide a Welcoming Atmosphere**--We provide the best possible experience for each visitor by creating a welcoming atmosphere, maintaining a safe and natural environment, and respecting the individual's point of view.
- **Act with Integrity**--We maintain the trust of members, donors, and the community by observing the highest ethical standards and being accountable to all constituencies for the achievement of our mission.
- **Provide Diverse Experiences and Educational Programs**--We immerse people in nature through a variety of individual and organized group activities. We engage people in frequent experiences in nature beginning at an early age.
- **Empower People to Share their Love and Knowledge of Nature**--We foster an ethic of influence by providing opportunities for people to act on their conservation values through sharing with others, volunteer service, and financial contributions.
- **Deliver Science-Based Interpretation**--We teach people how to think, not what to think. We provide hands-on, science-based interpretive experiences and utilize the inquiry method in our teaching. We define interpretation as "a mission-



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nnections between

the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource." National Association for Interpretation 2007.

- **Collaborate**--We seek opportunities to build relationships in order to strengthen our community. Internally, we embrace a spirit of teamwork and mutual support with staff, volunteers, members, and visitors. Externally, we seek to partner with other organizations that have common objectives.
- **Manage Our Lands**--We actively manage our lands to provide and maintain in perpetuity a mosaic of bio-diverse habitats for visitor experience, education, and research. We strive to maintain healthy ecosystems by enhancing, restoring, and preserving native biodiversity.

Hospitality Tip of the Week™: Focus on Identity

First say to yourself what you would be; and then do what you have to do. | *Epictetus, Greek Philosopher*

The bottom line message to you is this:

Are you prepared to become and remain a "Top Ten" Player in Your Hospitality Marketplace or are you going to continue to be one of the "other" statistics? Success does not come by accident or chance.

Contact us for assistance –

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John Hogan is a successful hospitality executive, educator, author and consultant and is a frequent keynote speaker and seminar leader at many hospitality industry events. He is CEO and Co-Founder of HospitalityEducators.com , which has more than 2000 resource pages and has become the #1 independent website for hotel owners and managers. He is also the Principal of HoganHospitality.com , which offers hotel expert witness services and hospitality consulting..

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