

teaching note

Hospitality for the Homeless: The case of Camillu's House

Summary

Camillus House (CH) is a not for profit organization that was founded to help in the provision of hospitality services to the homeless in South Florida. The organization seeks to ensure that everyone's basic human need for food, clothing, and overnight shelter (i.e. hospitality) are met. CH aids in the elimination of the various challenges of subordination and subjectivity amongst the guest and host by treating all the institution's occupants as a family. This has been achieved through the in-house policies adopted by the institution. This study was aimed at understanding the benchmark factors necessary for offering hospitality services to the homeless.

From the study, some of the evident effects of homelessness include physiological effects felt by both the individuals living on the streets and those that offer hospitality services to the homeless. Market forces and social processes are the perceived leading causes of homelessness in the streets of America. Therefore, social service providers such as CH should develop an ethical perspective geared towards the provision of hospitality services. They must ensure that the individuals asking for help have human and reflective objectives and thus the service providers need to identify the best ways of assessing the qualities and the characteristics of individuals soliciting help. Tolerance and understanding are some of the qualities required of non-profit hospitality service providers. In social welfare settings, it is essential for the hosts to do away with the imposed boundaries and welcome the seekers of hospitality without imposed reservations. It is also vital for every individual or organization to develop a new perspective of thinking during the provision of hospitality services, and this will ensure that interactions between those asking for help and the service providers lead to meaningful results.

Target Audience

The target audience of this case study are undergraduate students. The case is most suitable to a social responsibility course, but may be used in human resources, organizational behavior, or marketing courses to help students better understand how CSR initiatives aid in employee and customer involvement and retention. It is suggested that the course in which the case is used is seeking to examine the policies and practices of global hospitality and tourism entities with respect to the local communities in which they operate, both as members of the global business community and as shared stewards of the planet. The case should enable students to take an up-close-and-personal look at volunteerism from different perspectives and review the pro-social behaviors of hospitality and tourism companies. Students will explore opportunities for positive social change as they

investigate how the hospitality and tourism industries can contribute both locally and globally to key social issues like homelessness.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this case study, students will be able to:

- Identify the industry's current methods of best practice addressing the major social issue of homelessness; identify the benefits, concerns, keys to success, and situations in which hospitality and tourism companies should utilize each of the methods.
- Discuss the evolving pro-social policy of a global hospitality or tourism company and describe its corresponding social responsibility initiative that exemplifies each method.
- Develop and demonstrate an appreciation and understanding of his/her own individual civic responsibility toward solving an important social issue from the perspective of an individual working in the hospitality or tourism industries.
- Apply the learned CSR methods to create a strategically-aligned awareness campaign for a major hospitality or tourism company that links its efforts with a prominent social welfare organization that directly addresses an important social problem like homelessness.

Lesson Plan

This plan may be developed by an individual student or group of students. Each student (or group) will select a major hospitality or tourism organization and take an in-depth look at their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities to date. Each student/group will complete a session of service/volunteer work at an approved community social welfare organization to gain personal experience with the staff to see how they operate and the population they serve. The student/group should then return to the class to develop a CSR initiative for the chosen company that brings together the student's/group's practical volunteer work with the information presented in the case. The initiative should be in alignment with the corporate mission, vision and any values or culture that have been identified in the study

Discussion Topics and Questions

What are the industry's current methods of best practice addressing the major social issue of homelessness?

Instructor Information: Beyond the standard practices of providing food, shelter, clothing, hygiene and basic medical and psycho-social attention, the observant student will have picked up and commented on the statement "To best serve the homeless, the CH staff remarked that it is pivotal to help individuals successfully

overcome factors (addiction, trauma) that keep them homeless". The observant student will discuss the concept of absolute hospitality which the paper clearly suggests is a best practice.

What are the benefits, concerns, keys to success, and situations in which hospitality and tourism companies should utilize these benchmark methods?

Instructor Information: Similar to a SWOT analysis, this asks the student to assess how specific organizations use or fail to use the benchmark methods demonstrated by Camillus House and how these tactics position the organizations for success. The discussion should delve into the benefits (strengths), concerns (weaknesses), keys to success (opportunities) and situations (threats) concerning the various methods. Specifically regarding the keys to success, asking students to elaborate on what those key drivers are and why they promote success is of interest.

How can individuals and organizations shift their perspectives of the marginalized in order to better accommodate them?

Instructor Information: The simple answers might involve sensitivity training methods. A more creative approach might be to ask the employee to "walk a mile in their shoes". An example of that could be to spend a night on the street without money or food to understand better the environment they wish to escape when seeking shelter. As mentioned in the first discussion above, the observant student will discuss the concept of absolute hospitality as a best practice. That same student might address that again here by expanding upon the statement "The ethical demands of absolute hospitality require moving past the set limits that influence the development of tensions between the hosts, the visitors, strangers, the poor, and the affluent."

How does providing hospitality for the homeless align with the CSR initiatives of major hospitality organizations?

Instructor Information: Hospitality companies in the for-profit world provide accommodations i.e. hotel corporations, and food i.e. restaurants, catering, convention centers, festivals as well as hotels. CSR initiatives of these companies may involve sharing of excess resources (diminishing quickly in value) which become highly valuable to the not-for-profit caring for the homeless. Examples might include donating furniture when renovating (see <https://mustardseedfla.org/>), donating linens when showing slight signs of wear, donating soaps and shampoos (see <https://cleantheworld.org/>), donating foods that went unserved and have expiring shelf life (see <https://foodrescue.us/>), donating in-kind services such as lending employee or proprietary expertise in any area of hospitality including design and construction, maintenance and engineering, rooms division, food & beverage, accounting and finance and even marketing.

Has anyone had to go without a meal or had to receive hospitality from an organization like CH?

Instructor Information: This question elicits admission and sharing of experience and can be very powerful in a classroom or online group chat. When it is realized that a fellow student has gone through this it can bring the entire class much closer to the issue.

Think about the last person you saw on the corner of a street with a sign asking for a job, food or money. What were your thoughts about that individual?

Instructor Information: This question asks the student to think about that fleeting impression which so often causes them to say "they should just go get a job". The discussion should delve into why the person might be in that situation and unable to get a job or incapable of holding a job. Mental illness, alcoholism, substance abuse, rejected by family are some reasons that could be suggested.

Alternatively, the instructor may choose to present the class with a picture of a homeless person asking for something on the street (see below). They may then ask for their evaluation of the image and generate a class discussion around what is being viewed. They may then guide the class to reconsider the image through the lens provided by those individuals from CH and in the literature. Questions may include: When you see this image: What is your initial opinion of this individual? What do you think they want? What feelings does it provoke? How do you think you can best help? In this image below, the person is holding a cross. How does religion serve to support these individuals?



(Segar, 2016)

For those who have volunteered and served at a homeless shelter or soup kitchen: How did that impact you personally? Do you continue to volunteer? At similar or different types of institutions?

Instructor Information: Straight forwardly asking the student to discuss personal experiences is a good approach to fleshing out meaningful discussion. The instructor should then ask the class to reflect upon those experiences in the new light of what has been learned from the case and the discussion.

Assessment

Students will be required to research a major global hospitality or tourism company and complete a written assignment that includes a detailed introduction, identification of mission, vision and values or culture. Students will also identify social issues and causes being addressed by the company's CSR efforts through a review of the company's current CSR initiatives and determine whether those initiatives are strategically aligned with the company's mission and goals. Students will discuss how their newly-developed initiative fits with the above and make the case as to why a for-profit hospitality company should be assisting a non-profit hospitality provider. Students will use the six traits of writing (conventions, ideas, word choice, organization, voice, and sentence fluency) and be evaluated on their ability to communicate their plan.

Additional Readings and Resources

Girling, R.H., Gordy, H. & Lanier, P. (2016). *The Good Company: Sustainability in Hospitality, Tourism and Wine*.

Homeless information: Florida (n.d.a.) Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.hud.gov/states/florida/homeless>

Homeless shelter directory (n.d.a.) Helping the needy of America. Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.homelesshelterdirectory.org/florida.html>

Kotler, P. & Lee, N. (2013). *Corporate Social Responsibility: Doing the Most Good for Your Company and Your Cause*.

Miami-Dade County Homeless Trust (n.d.a.) Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <http://homelesstrust.org>

Segar, M. (2016). Image retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <http://theconversation.com/not-just-a-place-to-live-from-homelessness-to-citizenship-97170>

Six Traits writing rubric (2019). Retrieved on April 12, 2019 from <https://www.slideshare.net/castel31/six-traits-writing-rubric>

Rubric for Six Traits of Writing

	6 Exemplary	5 Strong	4 Proficient	3 Developing	2 Emerging	1 Beginning
Ideas and Content: Primary Focus/theme Supporting information	Exceptionally clear, focused, engaging with relevant, strong supporting detail	Clear, focused, interesting ideas with appropriate detail	Evident main idea with some support which may be general or limited	Main idea may be cloudy because supporting detail is too general or even off topic	Purpose and main idea may be unclear and cluttered by irrelevant detail	Lacks central idea; development is minimal or non-existent
Organization: Introduction Conclusion Overall Structure	Effectively organized in logical and creative manner Creative and engaging intro and conclusion	Strong order and structure Inviting intro and satisfying closure	Organization is appropriate, but conventional Attempt at introduction and conclusion	Attempts at organization; may be a "list" of events Beginning and ending not developed	Lack of structure; disorganized and hard to follow Missing or weak intro and conclusion	Lack of coherence; confusing No identifiable introduction or conclusion
Voice: Narrative (e.g. 1st person) Sense of audience	Expressive, engaging, sincere Strong sense of audience	Appropriate to audience and purpose Writer behind the words comes through	Evident commitment to topic Inconsistent sense of audience	Voice may be inappropriate or non-existent Writing may seem mechanical	Writing tends to be flat or stiff Little or no hint of writer behind word	Writing is lifeless No hint of the writer
Sentence Fluency: Variety Flow, rhythm	High degree of craftsmanship Effective variation in sentence patterns	Easy flow and rhythm Good variety in length and structure	Generally in control Lack variety in length and structure	Some awkward constructions Many similar patterns and beginnings	Often choppy Monotonous sentence patterns Frequent run-on sentences	Difficult to follow or read aloud Disjointed, confusing, rambling
Word Choice: Effectiveness Appropriate Imagery	Precise, carefully chosen Strong, fresh, vivid image	Descriptive, broad range of words Word choice energizes writing	Language is functional and appropriate Descriptions may be overdone at times	Words may be correct but mundane No attempt at deliberate choice	Monotonous, often repetitious, sometimes inappropriate	Limited range of words Some vocabulary misused
Conventions: Spelling, grammar, syntax	Exceptionally strong control of standard conventions of writing	Strong control of conventions; errors are few and minor	Control of most writing conventions; occasional errors with high risks	Limited control of conventions; frequent errors do not interfere with understanding	Frequent significant errors may impede readability	Numerous errors distract the reader and make the text difficult to read
Totals:						

(Six trait writing rubric, 2019)