

Viewpoint

Is it facilities or hospitality? We say 'hospitality services'

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It's been a year since we broadened Clarion's horizons to include the services that relate to our core dining service consulting practice – conference and event management, lodging, audio/visual services and the like. We've been calling it "facilities services."

While that's technically accurate, my cohorts, Angela Phelan and Ernie Wilder, and I have come to recognize the phrase doesn't actually describe what we're about.

Corporate and campus food services' central purpose generally is employee or student dining, but also includes catering services, from delivering coffee to a conference room to serving a formal banquet.

Conference management, whether a formal department or a part-time duty for an administrative assistant, involves . . .

- interaction with the dining service for event catering;
 - scheduling event times; assigning spaces;
 - ordering and coordinating the other services needed for the event
- and then seeing that all the pieces fit together at the right time and place.

They're all interrelated, and they're all aspects of hospitality.

Serving good meals in a welcoming atmosphere in the employee or student dining center (and the faculty dining room) is hospitality in the same sense as the service you'd expect in a fine restaurant.

Well-served meals and refreshments, competent, friendly meeting services and comfortable, efficiently-managed lodging facilities all fall under the mantle of "hospitality."

They're important equally in a corporate setting and on a campus. They say, "This is a good organization. You'll enjoy working, studying or visiting here."

That's why we've decided to redefine ourselves as "consultants in dining and hospitality services."

I wouldn't call it "re-branding." We're not changing what we do or how we do it, or how we face the world. We're just adopting a better and more accurate description of the services we offer.

We're here to help you improve the quality, service, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of all the hospitality-related services your organization offers or plans to offer; develop effective long-range planning; create new, exciting concepts, and plan and design imaginative, efficient dining facilities.

- Tom Mac Dermott