

# Responsible Hospitality: Theory and Practice

**Rebecca Hawkins and Paulina Bohdanowicz**

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
<b>Chapter 2: The reasons for doing good</b>	<b>19</b>
Chapter 3: Defining good – the principles of responsible business	29
Chapter 4: Good in the context of hospitality	46
Principle 1: Avoid wasteful use of resources and protect and, where possible, improve the environment	66
Principle 2: Prepare for the (un)expected	97
Principle 3: Develop products that are responsible and can be operated responsibly	112
Principle 4: Develop mechanisms to take full account of the views of people and communities	134
Principle 5: Embed responsible business practices throughout the supply chain	151
Principle 6: Engage employees and customers in actions that support environmental, economic and social wellbeing	175
Principle 7: Contribute to the development of public policy that promotes environmental, social and economic wellbeing	205
Principle 8: Define responsible business values and communicate good practice	218
Principle 9: Build trust through transparency	232
Principle 10: Take responsible business to the heart of the company	248
Chapter 5: A Faustian bargain?	258
Afterword	267
Glossary of terms	275
List of acronyms	278

# Part 1: The Theory of Responsible Business

## 2 The reasons for doing good

*The dogmas of the last 30 years have been discredited. The unwavering pursuit of economic growth – embodied in the overwhelming focus on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – has left over a billion people in dire poverty, and has not notably improved the well-being of those who were already rich, nor even provided us with economic stability. Instead it has brought us straight to the cliff edge of rapidly diminishing natural resources and unpredictable climate change. No wonder that people are desperately seeking an alternative vision to guide our societies.*

(Abdallah *et al.*, 2009)

This chapter opens with the heralding of a silent revolution. A revolution in which business leaders in most major global companies have come to acknowledge (in their business literature if not their operational practices) that business, economic prosperity, society and the quality of the environment are interdependent. With this realisation has come an acceptance, albeit modest, that the role of business has changed. In short, businesses have come to recognise that (alongside others), they need to play a role in addressing the issues associated with increasing population, resource consumption and so on


It would be fantastic – not to mention fantastical – to state that this change has resulted from a moral conversion within the business community. The early advertisements from some would certainly lead us to believe that this is the case. The reality, however, is rather more pragmatic as explored below.

### The evolution of the responsible business concept

The concept of the caring corporation is, of course, not new. The responsible business movement has its roots in the early businesses (many of them run by people with strong religious beliefs) that built villages for their employees to live in, established schools for the children of their employees and so on. In today's context, it probably has its roots in the 1950s and emerged in a more coherent framework in the 1970s. Key points in the evolution of the concept are demonstrated in Figure 5.

1970	Milton Friedman's commentary on business
1972	United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm
1973	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) OPEC oil crisis Businesses implement energy saving measures
1976	Shell includes responsible business in General Business Principles
1977	Global Sullivan Principles launched The International Labour Organization (ILO) Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
1980	Business in the Community formed
1987	Publication of Brundtland Report
1989	Launch of Valdez (now Ceres) principles Launch of ICC Code of conduct (updated 2010) Publication of early environmental reports
1990	Montreal Protocol for the Protection of the Ozone Layer ratified
1992	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development – business invited World Travel & Tourism Council launches Environmental Research Centre International Hotels Environment Initiative formed
1994	Convention on Biological Diversity ratified
1996	Agenda 21 for Travel & Tourism published
1996	ISO 14001 introduced
1997	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification ratified Global Reporting Initiative launched
1999	Global Compact launched
2001	UNWTO Global Code of Ethics published
2001	Enron collapses
2002	World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg
2003	Launch of Benchmarks for Global Corporate Responsibility
2004	Kyoto Protocol ratified
2005	Aarhus Convention on public right of access to environmental information ratified Launch of UN Principles for Responsible Investment
2006	First meeting of World Economic Forum
2008	Lehman Brothers files for bankruptcy
2009	COP 15
2012	Rio + 20 event

Awareness of environmental/sustainable development issues



**Figure 5:** The evolution of the responsible business concept

**Chapter extract**

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