



Mediterranean SYNERGY

THE 5TH TOURISM FORUM • 1-2 MARCH 2018



medtourismforum.com

associate partners



WOMEN LEADERSHIP

in the hospitality industry

Chiara Mencarelli, A.DA (Associazione Direttori d'Albergo) Vice President, Trainer & Hospitality Consultant

In the hospitality sector, there are some required characteristics that women have by nature (also due to culture), making their presence in the Hotel industry really indispensable. For example, the attention to detail and nuances; the inclination to take care of people (either customers or collaborators); the ability to supervise, take care of and manage the "home" in various ways (remember that already in ancient Rome, the married woman was entrusted with the key to the house and its economic management, and moreover, the etymology of the word 'economy' precisely means "house management"); last but not least, the predisposition to being "welcoming" in a biological and a psychological sense, and this gift of nature gives her spontaneity in making the customer feel welcomed and pampered as "at home".

But how do you become a Leader?

We state that everyone is born with their own "talents" and that not all aspire or are led to play management roles. Even better I would say that to be a leader "one is born and becomes", that is to say the gift of nature is the first point, because it takes a vocation, the potential to be a leader; secondly, the conscious will of the woman is needed to truly reach the top, which is achieved by continuously orienting one's choices in a coherent way to one's own ambition and with sacrifice.

So there is the institutional training but then there are specific courses that lead her to refine her business skills (long life learning). However, I would add the need to make daily choices always in line with his ambition as a leader: friendships, free time, books to read, how to dress, when to go on holiday or how to pursue a goal.

As a third point, I believe that a personal and existential growth training is indispensable and today there are many seminars dedicated to personal development and motivation, dedicated to women leaders who want to grow, to learn their original style of leadership, avoiding becoming a "man with a skirt"!

• **Once in power, the woman manager must certainly have many skills, but in a hotel the most important I believe, is the ability to build, patiently train the collaborators. With humility, time, and dedication, no one better than a woman can always put the value of people first and build a winning team!**

Employees who are functional to the efficiency of their hotel should be allowed to grow, delegating tasks to them with confidence, after clarifying individual objectives, roles, and procedures: only in this way can we guarantee an impeccable service and an unforgettable experience for the guests.

The role of the Hotel Director in Italy (and probably worldwide) is mainly held by men (a study of the Italian Hotel Directors Association, of which I am Vice President of, highlights a presence of women equal to 12% of total in the role of General Manager of a hotel) and this I think is also due to the fact that this sector requires the Manager to have an important physical presence (including weekends, and holidays) and that the opening to the public 24/7 entails a big responsibility and commitment! So the hospitality industry, unfortunately, has a limitation for the female manager who is experiencing motherhood.

So, for reasons linked in part to the culture of the country or family in which they live, or to motherhood, women delay or interrupt, even if temporarily, their careers. This topic is

particularly close to my heart because I recently became a mother, I chose to take care of my baby daughter, leave for a few years the work as Hotel Manager and continue only with some institutional commitments and occasional consultations in the touristic field. In fact, the birth of a child is a wonderful event, but it puts the woman in front of choices and continuous compromises if she wants to be present emotionally and physically in the first few years of her child's life.

Men (although they are more present in the life of their newborn in recent decades) have always been less professionally conditioned by the birth of a child. They have always worked, and have been managing power for millennia, and for this, we have numerous examples of great leaders, entrepreneurs, "male" geniuses who have historically occupied leading roles in every field. And let's not forget that culture, philosophy, law, sociology, finance... everything is a product of the male mind.

Women later began their "leading role as a leader", having been held for centuries in the role of "angel of the hearth" as we say in Italy, so we have fewer examples of leading women. Despite this, there are excellent cases today, both in politics and in economics, which show how things go very well with female management because women bring a balance of peace and they are particularly inclined to practice humanistic functions.

Women have so much to give to the planet earth, and I am sure that the whole humanity will always derive greater benefit from the presence of the woman at the top of the power declined in various sectors. Humanity needs the original contribution of the feminine intelligence because the woman sees and understands things that the male does not grasp (and vice versa). She has a completely different approach to life compared to man and our world will certainly be enriched when a true balance of power will be achieved between the expression of male and female intelligence. ■