

Output from

Training: the Future - Tourism

Industry Training forum for tourism and
hospitality

convened by:
The Office of Post-Compulsory Education and Training,
in conjunction with:
The Tourism Industry Training Board and
The Department of State Development

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TRAINING: the FUTURE – TOURISM FORUM REPORT

The Training: the Future – Tourism, industry skills and training forum was held on 28 June 2001.

It focussed on tourism and hospitality, with participants from tourism and hospitality businesses, industry bodies, RTOs and government. The forum was characterised by a strong sense of co-operation and direction, guided by Quantum Leap and promising mutual support for the industry skilling needs to meet the vision and the demands of the next 20 years.

This report contains:

- **A list of key skill needs, with broad priorities allocated.**
- **A record of the analyses provided by groups of forum participants, of skill needs and the appropriate training response.**

The following is based on notes taken during the forum and ideas documented by participants, it is not a verbatim record but is very close.

SECTION 1 - SKILLS DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Discussion of the skills development needs for the workforce with the aim of reaching a shared understanding of what is driving the skills development requirements and a consensus on the priorities for skills development

ANALYSIS 1

Tourism strategy Tourism 21 Quantum Leap gives a lead. The industry today has a skill base that has evolved over time. The tourism experience 1970 to 1990 had a limited range reflecting a historic perspective of the market, it lacked a customer focus and was inadequately trained.

While the traditional hospitality skills will remain relevant the needs have expanded.

It is important now to look ahead through to the year 2020 - what would we be talking about in relation to skill requirements in 2020?

There is an evolutionary change. Discussion needs to be about the commencement of an industry called tourism from a design perspective and the role of designing the future industry.

What may the new industry look like?

It is likely for example, that ownership and operating will change there could be more distinction between owners and operators, more corporate ownership.

Clusters are important - location based and commonality of purpose based, for example the "eco- cluster".

A product of the industry will be the creation of memories, for example eco-experience memories.

This has implications for the skill base that needs to change to respond to, for example, the range of technical skills for guiding, or the recreational vehicle industry.

There is a new skill arena that requires the capacity to manage a mix of new markets and marketing, new technologies, technical skill retailing, and skills development at all levels from management through to transactions. In addition there are regulatory, compliance safety, legal and risk management issues.

The "design parameters" include heightened competition with other tourism destinations and with alternatives for discretionary spending, consumer expectations, higher quality and high volume, more targeted, consumers willingness to pay more for quality, business reality such as seasonality.

Management of the industry is important.

Managing the management is an overall need.

If you don't have the management you don't have a skills base.

Strategy is becoming more important.

Tourism a young industry - strategic development and senior management are very important.

Companies wanting to invest capital in future tourism projects will require good management.

ANALYSIS 2

Service is a high priority.

Expectations of service are high.

Customers are discerning.

Growth in gaming, adventure tourism, eco tourism.

Regulatory impacts such as in relation to smoking, responsible service of alcohol and gambling have an impact on skill needs.

New developments - have specific skill needs.

Enterprise size, regionality and seasonality all impact on skill needs and how they are met.

Computer literacy of the industry is significant.

Middle management skills are important.

High turnover of staff is a problem for skilling.

Communication and interpersonal skills are important and these plus knowledge of tourism are important for the wider workforce in contact with tourism clients.

Multi-skilling is important, particularly for small business.

Skill needs can be prioritised.

Customer service culture is most important.

How can customer service skills be changed? There is a need to address this in schools.

Office management and computer skills are required.

Enterprise development is important.

ANALYSIS 3

Skill needs cross all levels and need to be targeted to general workforce & management.

Small business skills are important, including 1 person businesses.

Communication skills at all levels.

Multi-skilling is important.

E-commerce - especially opportunities for small business.

IT skills - basic skills are required.

What is impacting on the needs?

- Customer expectations are increasing
- Competitive marketplace - national & international
- Staff entering - many come in as casual - some want to stay - they need a career path
- Accreditation is an important industry self regulation mechanism so is important for training
- Regulatory framework
- Technical change
- Experiential tourism - more active and interactive tourism
- Promotional icons important - wilderness, fine food & wine heritage, history, guides etc
- Selling skills
- Small business
- Casualisation & staff loyalty
- Cross industry product knowledge.

ANALYSIS 4

Skills needs are across the board - all levels.

The industry need positive attitudes, pride in Tasmania, a team feel career paths.

People need to be able to understand that industry changes – and deal with market changes.

Multi-skilling is important.

Local knowledge, product knowledge and a service mentality are important.

All people in the industry should know the strategic plan for industry and this should guide training.

Management skills a major problem especially for small business;

- Seasonality can be planned for - budgeting for seasonality,
- Yield management is important,
- Industry needs a team feel.

The benefit of skill development needs recognition.

Recognition of people's existing skills is required.

Customer service skills are important.

Customer expectations need to be met.

Marketing skills are needed for increasing yield.

Marketing skills need to focus on market segments.

IT skills are required, but targeted where benefits are available.

Many people in the industry require re-skilling or up-skilling skills without recognising it.

OTHER ANALYSIS

Need to recognise different staff groups:

- People who want a career in the industry
- People who work in industry because that is the best they can get
- People who want extra money, casuals, students- hardest to train but major customer involvement.

Attitudinal skills are important

As a result of the skill needs analysis, a list of key needs was developed and this was subsequently prioritised using broad priority groupings.

This list follows.

This is the prioritised list of needs that emerged from workshopping skill needs

There was an understanding that traditional skills would still be important but the focus of the participants was on emerging needs, management, marketing, attitudes and customer service.

<i>Skill need</i>	<i>Priority</i>
Small business skills	high
Communication (at all levels)	high
IT & E Commerce	medium
Multi-skilling	high
Selling skills	high
Promotion of industry icons	medium
Marketing & PR skills	medium high
Guiding skills	medium
Frontline management	high
Eco-tourism	medium
Adventure tourism	medium low
Legislative requirements	medium high
Customer service skills	high
Management	
Budgeting for seasonality	high
Yield management	high
Economic sustainability	high
Business planning	high
People management	high
Strategic skills	medium high
Change management skills	medium high
Risk management	high
Technical skills	medium high
Understanding/Analysis of industry intelligence	medium high
Top down skilling	high

SECTION 2 - TRAINING SYSTEM RESPONSE

Discussion of how the training system can appropriately respond skills development needs with a view to reaching a consensus on what is appropriate and what is potentially feasible both short and long term in matching training provision with industry demand.

ANALYSIS 1

Requirements of the training system:

- Pathways from schools and expansion of VET in Schools
- Develop, review, adapt industry competency standards
- Accreditation/ best practice models
- Funding training for owner operators
- Access to trainer/assessor mentors by businesses
- Promotion of what training and funding etc is available
- Relationships with others - cumulative competence and clusters regional locations
- Plain English VET access
- Minimise turnover through trials
- Recognise existing skills
- Flexible, accessible, customised, inclusive, timely RTO service on and off site
- On-line and correspondence
- RTOs need to be as responsive as any industry sector
- Minimise public paperwork
- Employment subsidies.

ANALYSIS 2

The state needs a rigorous system for identifying industry needs. It needs to be industry driven.

What training has worked well? - partnerships between RTOs and industry.

Partnerships are also important in planning:

- industry needs
- visionary approach
- research,
- trends
- opportunities
- consumer expectations
- government.

Many of the generic skills fit well with public funding.

Also cutting edge industry skills training should be funded.

Need strategies to manage seasonality, for example:

- Suspend traineeships over winter (use for study)
- Flexible pathways
- Exchanges between states - expand on existing moves into the area.

RTOs need to be more responsive to changing industry needs, for example for gaming.

There should be funding for smaller training units, units of competency and below.

Subsidies for employment related to training have a positive impact on training but little impact on employment longer term.

ANALYSIS 3

Need more flexibility in traineeships for seasonal work.

Train in winter.

Skills audits are needed.

Needs are a challenge, training is driven too much by what is always done or what is currently attracting attention.

Recognition of different target groups for training is required:

- business owners & managers
- middle managers
- new entrants.

Vet in schools is needed to develop the appropriate culture & interest in and knowledge of tourism.

Other training programs need to include information on tourism that a range of occupations can respond to the expectations of tourists.

There is a perception that training is expensive and that government subsidy is necessary; so there needs to be a way to measure and promote the benefits of training.

Quality assurance for RTOs is a big challenge.

The impact of employment subsidies is emphasised - they are very important.

ANALYSIS 4

The training system could respond by expanding the current range of partnerships with enterprises and deliver specific training for industry & enterprises.

There is some difficulty doing this with small business.

Could extend partnership arrangements within clusters.

TAFE could look at expanding partnership arrangements.

Increased regionalisation means increased dispersion of the training need - this has cost implications and resulting difficulties for government to fund training at an acceptable cost.

Workplace training can be limited by the capacity of individual enterprises to support effective training.

There is a need to explore mechanisms that will provide a coordinated approach to workplace training at a regional level (local organisations, industry associations, high schools, etc).

There is evidence of de-skilling when students work for people who don't recognise their skills – skills are lost.

There is a need for top-down training - a need to drive the training agenda this way.

Support for elements of units - small number on regular basis.

Need new funding arrangements to do this.

There needs to be a funding mechanism for enterprises with a high level of casual staff and high staff turnover.

OTHER ANALYSIS

There may be a need to repackage units of competency into small units.