An investigation of activities/programs in tourism and hospitality linking business operations, customer/visitor services and human resource management aimed at improving visitor experiences and business outcomes.

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Signed:       Dated:   25th June 2005
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(Dedicated to my Dad, Brian Simpkin (1939-2005).
He never really quite understood my pursuits, but supported me anyway.)
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary

This report aims to outline and discuss the findings of a 2004 Churchill Fellowship funded investigation into integrative best practice business models in tourism and hospitality. The investigation took place across England, Scotland, Ireland and Florida.

Data was gathered from a range of private sector, government business enterprise and public sector entities including hotels, tourism operators, universities, government departments and individuals. In total, over fifty interviews were conducted over a six week period (11 March 2005 - 23 April 2005) and were semi structured in nature.

As part of the Fellowship I undertook a four day intensive business management course conducted by the Disney Institute in Florida, Orlando. This programme highlights and communicates the business practices that have allowed Disney to become one of the world’s most enduring and successful global brands.

The Fellowship investigation aimed to look at a number of recognised programmes delivering best practice or support to industry especially in the fields of business management, professional development and human resources management.

1.2 Acknowledgements

Such a comprehensive study such as this would not have been possible without the assistance of the Churchill Trust. My gratitude for financial assistance to allow me to follow my passion and for the faith placed in my ability to achieve outcomes can not be understated.

Also, thanks those people who provided me with references; Mr Gunter Schranz, Mr Michael Roberts and Mr Simon Fishwick. To those who afforded me valuable time whilst in their country, I extend appreciation; especially Therese Lynch and Matt McNulty who both went above and beyond the call of duty on my behalf. To my (sometimes bewildered) family who have unfailing support for my endeavours.
2.0 Executive Summary

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The Fellowship aimed to investigate activities/programs in tourism and hospitality linking business operations, customer/visitor services and human resource management aimed at improving visitor experiences and business outcomes.

During the six week Fellowship the following entities/programmes were explored:

- The Investors in People Standard (England and Scotland);
- The Hotel and Catering International Management Association’s Hospitality Assured programme and The Learning Skills Council (England)
- Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland and People 1st (Scotland)
- Failte Ireland, Irish Hotels Federation and the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism (Republic of Ireland)
- Disney Approach to Loyalty (Disneyworld, Florida)

Although the above represent the major foci of the study, many other individuals were interviewed to establish the interlinking synergy between these ‘major players’ and others.

2.1 Major Findings

Overwhelmingly, recognition of the improvements required of tourism/hospitality operators and affiliated entities was consistent. Issues such as poor industry perception, requisite business management improvements and recognition of the place of human resource development were identified as pressing challenges to be met.

However, it was also equally overwhelmingly agreed upon that these three challenges can be effectively addressed via programmes that are comprehensive and cooperatively implemented. That is, government, business, educators and tourism marketing bodies must work in concert not in isolation. In the tourism/hospitality industry one can not separate the triumvirate of requisite components that lead to success; people (training, effective HRM), marketing (product development & promotion) and requisite general business management acumen.

In Australia we are unable to rely on short term solutions such as wholesale importation of entry level labour like Ireland and the United Kingdom have. This affords us some remarkable opportunities to resolve our own emerging problems from the inside – from the employee and workplace up.

I hope to design and implement a pilot programme based on the findings of this Fellowship. Such a programme will illustrate that success in this arena will allow Australia to implement best practice at a grass roots level to achieve sustained growth and long term competitive advantage over competitors by leveraging embedded business excellence.

I will also continue to ‘agitate’ for review of our current vocational training framework.
## 3.0 Itinerary/Programme

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<td>Marion Lardner, Director of Sales</td>
<td>Renaissance Chancery Court, London</td>
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<td>Kremi Armstrong, Sales Manager</td>
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<td>Nicola Crane, HR Manager</td>
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<td>Louisa Saville, Asst HR Manager</td>
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<td>Paul Buchanan, Project Manager</td>
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<td>Sandra Watson, Head, HRM, School of Mgt</td>
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<td>31 Mar 05</td>
<td>Ros Sutherland Senior Lecturer &amp; Fellow, School of Marketing &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Napier University</td>
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<td>31 Mar 05</td>
<td>Fiona Michie, Tourism Project Manager, Steve Robinson Team Leader, Marion Nicholson National Programmes Team Leader</td>
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<td>01 Apr 05</td>
<td>Jim Oag, Quality Centre Director</td>
<td>Investors in People</td>
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<td>Peter Russian, CEO</td>
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<td>04 Apr 05</td>
<td>Tony Mercer, Head of Quality and Standards</td>
<td>Visit Scotland</td>
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<td>Siubhan Daly, Communications</td>
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<td>04 Apr 05</td>
<td>Kate Tetley, Manager</td>
<td>People 1st</td>
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<td>05 Apr 05</td>
<td>Geoff Fenlon, General Manager</td>
<td>Edinburgh International Conference Centre</td>
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<td>07 Apr 05</td>
<td>Anne O’Carroll, Manager Strategic Issues</td>
<td>Irish Hotels Federation</td>
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<td>07 Apr 05</td>
<td>Margaret O’Reilly, Head of Corporate &amp; Industry Communications</td>
<td>Tourism Ireland</td>
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<td>08 Apr 05</td>
<td>Therese Lynch, PA to Matt McNulty</td>
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<td>11 Apr 05</td>
<td>Frank Magee, Chief Executive</td>
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<td>11 Apr 05</td>
<td>Kieran Sheedy, Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Department of Arts, Sport &amp; Tourism</td>
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<td>12 Apr 05</td>
<td>John Mulcahy, Head of Skills Training</td>
<td>Fáilte Ireland</td>
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<td>Mary Hall, Regional Prof. Development Advisor</td>
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<td>13 Apr 05</td>
<td>Phillip Smyth, Director Lecturers</td>
<td>Shannon College of Hotel Management</td>
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<td>14 Apr 05</td>
<td>Marketing Manager</td>
<td>Bunratty Castle</td>
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<td>14 Apr 05</td>
<td>Dr Joseph Hegarty, Head of School – Culinary Arts and Food Technology</td>
<td>Dublin Institute of Technology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Neil A. Andrews, Head of Department, School of Hospitality Management &amp; Tourism</td>
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<td>Geraldine Gorham, Lecturer, HR Management</td>
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(Ad hoc interview and data gathering events were undertaken where opportune. These have not been listed)
4.0 Background Information

All my working life has been spent in hospitality/tourism industry. Over this time I have developed a passion for the industry (or perhaps more accurately, sector) that has become one of the world’s largest and fastest growing. Globally, tourism represents around US$580 billion in receipts and employs around seventy million people (Ruddy, 2005). In Australia tourism accounts for around 9% of the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) and employs 6% of the workforce; some 549,000 people (Tourism Australia, 2005). In a more local Tasmanian context some 792,000 people visited the state year to date March, 2005, injecting just over AU$1 billion into the economy (Tourism Tasmania, 2004a), sustaining the employment of around 39,600 people (Tourism Tasmania, 2004b).

As an industry tourism/hospitality is labour intensive, able to sustain proportionally more employment per dollar of GDP than most other industries. However, over half of this employment is casual or part time contributing to a lack of surety of employment, perceived low benefits and less than average investment in human resource development by business (Parker, 2004). Until recently, the industry has been satisfied to maintain the status quo. Strong growth (especially in Tasmania) and improving visitor numbers have buoyed operators and created interest in tourism/hospitality related vocations.

But it is not to last. An aging workforce, a ‘greying’ population (Comm. Of Australia, 2004), increasing demand for premium product (May, 2005), and low unemployment has resulted in a belated recognition that, not only skills shortages but people shortages are robbing tourism and hospitality of the requisite inputs to adequately cater for the predicted strong growth to 2014 (international arrivals alone are predicted to rise by 70% in the next ten years (May, 2005)). Without properly skilled and committed staff the industry runs a very real and likely risk of not meeting the demands of our visitors, thus curtailing growth, profitability and business survival (Abernethy, 2004).

This was the impetus for the Churchill Fellowship study. Having spent time in industry, private practice and the education sector I was baffled by the continual reports of skills shortages in the Tasmanian industry (OPCET, 2003). Educational institutions/providers in Tasmania alone deliver literally hundreds of trained and certificated people to the industry each year but a high attrition rate between hospitality/tourism courses of study (both vocational and higher education) and the workplace means much of this investment in training is wasted (Rudall,
Deery & Stewart, 1996). Those who do make it to the industry may fail to meet the expectations of their employers and fail to secure long term employment (OPCET, 2003) or disconfirmation of expectation of the work or workplace leads others to opt out within a few years of entering the industry (Barron, 1999).

Whilst there is no doubt that skills shortages exist to some degree, like many others investigating the topic I looked to the business level unit itself for some alternative perspective. The more I considered the issues the more I have come to believe that much of what is reported as skills shortages at the entry level may be attributed to skills shortages or lack of implementation of good practice at the level of business management (Schlesinger & Heskett, 1991, Lashley, 2003).

It is no secret the tourism/hospitality industry has, for many years, been seen to be the vocation one does on the way to another profession (the waiter you see today is the doctor or lawyer you visit in a few years time!!) (Rowley & Purcell, 2001). It has also been viewed as sustaining occupations that are low paid, with few benefits (such as holiday and sick pay) and with little room for career progression (Naschberger, 2004). Highly casualised, occupations within the industry are perceived to offer few opportunities for professional development and a high staff turnover indicates poor recruitment, people management and retention practices (Tracy & Nathan, 2002, Thorntwaite & Sheldon, 2003).

In general, human resource management (HRM) including human resource development (HRD) within this industry is done relatively poorly. My own opinion likens this function to being one that is ‘bolted on’ to the side of the general management function of businesses and is seen to be a painful necessity due to compliance issues (eg. superannuation, OH&S, industrial relations etc) rather than a proactive, basic method of business management that exists within everyday processes of operating an organisation. Given that in this industry one cannot separate product from people (i.e. staff are an inseparable element of the hospitality/tourism product – you need people to wait tables, conduct tours, manage outlets etc), one would be forgiven for thinking that integrating HRM and HRD into the basic management function is frighteningly obvious. But not so.

Programmes such as the Investors in People model, the Optimus programme, the People 1st initiative and the Hospitality Assured quality assurance framework illustrated that the recognition and development of people in business (especially a labour intensive sector such
as hospitality/tourism) is the only way that industry will meet the current and emerging demands. So too, educators, government and individuals must work collectively to meet broader challenges to our industry including the aging workforce and decreasing numbers of people available for work due to low unemployment.

And so, the Churchill Fellowship has allowed me to look to these programmes, where they have been implemented and how they are supported. The opportunity to see first hand what differences such methods can make to individual businesses, employees and the broader industry has gone some way to what Dr Joseph Hegarty of the Dublin Institute of Technology suggests as the “alleviation of invincible ignorance” and acceptance of a more integrated approach to hospitality and tourism management.
5.0 England

Major foci of investigation
- Investors in People (including properties using the standard)
- Learning + Skills Council
- HCIMA Hospitality Assured

5.1 Investors in People

The Investors in People (IiP) Standard is a comprehensive national standard that identifies good practice as it relates to the activity of skilling people within an organisation to achieve business goals. It provides a framework for organisations to plan, implement and review business practices for improved performance, competitiveness and profitability. The standard encourages a cyclical approach to continuous improvement with a focus on developing and valuing people within the organisation. In essence it embeds the human resource management and development process within the everyday business management processes of the organisation.

As far back as 1964 the Industrial Training Act recognised the need for training and skills development to keep pace with a changing business environment. Through a number of legislative changes and governing bodies, training and business development continued until the IiP Standard was officially launched in 1994. Today over 40% of the UK workforce is employed in businesses that subscribe to the Standard. That equates to around 61,000 organisations across all industries.

Of course this level of saturation has not been achieved by IiP in isolation. Heavily backed by government funding (crossing over changes in administration) the Standard is also championed and promoted by the Learning+Skills Councils around England. This multilateral commitment from business, IiP, government and skills development providers has facilitated the widespread uptake of the business management model.

Benefits to business derived from the implementation of the model include:

- Increased profitability (eg. profit per employee is around £51 for IiP recognised organisations as compared to £18 per employee for non recognised organisations);
- Better cost control;
- Better planning, change management and strategic decision making;
- Greater sales and productivity;
- Improved motivation, decreased labour turnover and higher staff loyalty;
- Higher customer satisfaction.
Also, benchmarking opportunities allow organisations to learn from others in the same industry. For example, the Marriott Heathrow uses the accreditation process to audit their own processes and then compares them with other IiP recognised hotels to see how they can improve. So too, performance management processes embedded within the Standard allows performance feedback, career progression, succession planning and professional development to happen as a matter of course, not in an ad hoc reactive manner - thus leveraging the investment in staff to achieve business outcomes.

**CASE IN POINT**

It is interesting to note that all premium properties visited used the IiP Standard or similar models to manage staff, business objectives and HRD within their properties. In fact, all individuals interviewed seemed surprised that I asked questions regarding their processes. Such management tools seem to be embedded and are seen to be the norm to achieve required business and service outcomes.

This includes HRM Palaces, including The Tower of London. Catering to over a staggering 2.5 million visitors per year the White Tower is staffed by a largely older demographic (eg Yeomen of the Guard are retired members of the military) and relies heavily on performance management and professional development to maintain loyalty, reduce turnover and improve customer service.

Facilities include learning zones that provide open learning facilities for those studying toward vocational and higher education qualifications.

A recent move away from a public service culture to one of private enterprise has been underpinned by mechanisms to increase loyalty and reduce turnover of staff.

Other mechanisms used include collective bargaining with employees and unions, a well developed diversity programme and management development processes.
5.2 Learning+Skills Council

The Learning + Skills Council (LSC) was set up in 2001 and is a quasi non-government organisation (QUANGO) aiming to improve access to learning opportunities to increase the number of people over the age of 16 learning new skills. With a clear mandate to improve productivity and competitiveness of England to world-class standards it brings together a number of roles previously managed by several organisations. This includes:

- Managing funding for training (all training and education outside of the higher education system [eg. universities]);
- Planning as it relates to the provision of training and addressing skills shortages;
- Quality control and accreditation of training providers;
- Managing the national standards relating to the qualifications framework;
- Building relationships with industry;
- Promoting vocational education including new apprenticeships.

With an annual budget of £8.8 billion (2003-2004) (AU$20.73 billion!!) this is an organisation that clearly means business. The 47 local offices work with Sector Skills Councils (industry based advisory bodies), Regional Development Agencies local and regional skills development planning is supported by national plans and budgets and communicated to training providers for action. Review of planning is conducted as is quality assurance of training providers such as schools, colleges and private providers.

Like Australia, competency based training is embraced. However, total on the job learning is not ‘de rigueur’ and assessment only qualifications (widely accepted and utilised by business in Australia) do not seem to be supported. Curriculum still supports much of the delivery and underpinning principles (such as language and literacy) are delivered by institutional providers such as colleges and schools. Adopting such an approach may alleviate the emerging employer perception that Australia’s New Apprenticeship system lacks assessment rigor and fails to provide ‘employability’ skills (OPCET, 2003).

The Investors in People Standard is promoted and encouraged via the LSC. In fact, the Small Firms Initiative is a programme with a £30 million budget aimed to encourage small business to implement the IiP Standard through managerial training and development.

Here we begin to see the synergies provided by streamlining activities that have been traditionally segmented in our own context. That is, government bodies such as various state education departments, state vocational education and training bodies, state training quality assurance bodies, industry advisory bodies, industry representative bodies, schools, colleges,
TAFE and private providers allow for the duplication of services, initiatives and research. So too, some areas in need of assistance or development may fall through the cracks or are ignored because of funding shortfalls or an inability to place them with a body that accepts responsibility for it. Clearly a more concerted approach allows for a resolute, coordinated approach whilst still retaining a focus on quality of outcome for regional and sectoral needs.

5.3 HCIMA – Hospitality Assured

The Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) is the peak professional body for the hotel, catering and leisure sectors. It provides membership and professional recognition services to individuals as well as accrediting higher education programmes in hotel, catering and leisure management.

The Hospitality Assured programme is the standard for service and business excellence specifically designed for the hospitality industry. It is endorsed by the British Quality Foundation and Quality Scotland Foundation as well as the European Foundation for Quality Management Business Excellence Model which is widely recognised around the world as illustrating best practice in strategic management.

Like the IiP Standard it is a cyclical model that starts with the customer and moves through a process of planning, acting and review. Again, like the IiP model it recognises that people play a fundamental part in the success of the business and therefore much of the programme revolves around training, professional development and people management best practice.

Over 3,500 properties/providers in the UK are accredited including the Ritz, London. However, unlike the IiP Standard which has been heavily supported by Government, Hospitality Assured is largely self funding. The advantage to the hospitality industry is that it is designed specifically for businesses in this field. Of course, aligning business practices with this model (as with the IiP Standard) means that business is necessarily managed better with an emphasis on continuous improvement and therefore an impact on customer service and profitability follows.
6.0 Scotland

Major foci of investigation
- Scottish Enterprise
- Investors in People Scotland
- Visit Scotland
- People 1st

6.1 Scottish Enterprise (Edinburgh and Lothian)

Like Australia, tourism is one of the biggest industries in Scotland employing 9% of the country’s workforce. Clearly, due to the enormous economic contribution, this industry is one that has been targeted for development and support.

Scottish Enterprise (represented as a network of offices across Scotland including the Highlands and Islands) is Scotland’s main economic development agency and is committed to growing visitor spend by some 50% by 2015. Deriving a mandate directly from the Scottish Executive three key priorities have been identified for Scottish business in general – including tourism. These priorities are growing business, developing skills and learning and strengthening global connections.

As a prime target in this strategy, the development of people is seen to be vital; and as such issues such as management education, leadership development, recruitment and retention are identified as elements that must be addressed. Clearly, issues that we face in Australia (eg. managerial skill gaps, business development issues and crippling labour shortages) are also issues in Scotland.

How is Scottish Enterprise (SE) addressing these issues? Again, a concerted approach has been adopted. As the major development agency SE provides support such as the following to the tourism industry:

- Funding for the encouragement of innovation in tourism product and infrastructure, including overseas development, e-Tourism and a multilateral programme that fosters relationships between universities (research and development), industry bodies (VisitScotland) and industry operators;
- Funding and business support for product development in key areas such as angling, cultural tourism, forestry (similar to Tasmania), nature based tourism and ‘Scotlandwhiskey’ (an industry lead initiative based on the synergy between tourism and whiskey producers);
- International attractions benchmarking to allow Scottish businesses to emulate the best practices of international attractions;
- Masterclasses delivering leading edge practices and thinking in business for managers and innovators in the industry;
• Executive learning journeys encourage an outward view of tourism business management. Journeys have included study tours in Europe and Disney in Orlando, Florida;
• Workshops aimed at attracting and retaining customers;
• Recruitment and retention initiatives including training for long term unemployed people, QA demonstrator which illustrates the value of investment in training and skills development, encouragement of Modern Apprenticeships in tourism, funding for the Edinburgh Tourism Academy, regional tourism initiatives and professional development programmes for managers and staff;
• Funding to improve the quality of visitor experiences and supporting collaborative initiatives for specific destinations and projects;
• Supports the development of access into the country (air, sea, road and rail).

Responsibility for skills development and retention also rests with SE. Again the meld of business development, industry development and people development makes perfect sense and mirrors the idea that people cannot be separated from the general business equation in this industry.

In collaboration with Springboard, a body whose primary responsibility is to market hospitality and tourism careers, SE has developed marketing materials to encourage young people to the industry. These are high quality and use narrative to get ‘stories’ of people in the industry to prospective employees. So too, the partnership has developed a programme called the Service Excellence Passport which documents an individual’s training, experience and achievements in the workplace as a ‘logbook’ of what the person is capable of. It is intended to provide a vehicle that illustrates and encourages the development of excellence in service delivery.

Scottish Enterprise also funds national vocational education programmes to the tune of around £11.5 million and addresses training for young adults, mature adults, long term unemployed and the under employed (eg. women who have opted out of workforce participation). The focus is on developing employability and practical skills as well as meeting labour demand by engaging or re-engaging non-traditional sources of labour.

One of the most striking characteristics of this agency is the cohesive manner in which it works and the holistic manner in which it addresses business development. For example, if a tourism business is seeking funding for a specific development, the whole business is assessed for possible areas of improvement. Support is given to address shortfalls such as training, people management, business management and product development. Such support is afforded over time as part and parcel of the funding conditions. This ensures that the business has the
greatest possible chance of deriving the most benefit from public funds. So too, the industry is better placed to reap rewards such as a more skilled workforce, better business management and less attrition from the industry. I was impressed to see that the Investors in People model is heavily encouraged and supported and may be required as a prerequisite prior to funding being issued to organisations.

6.2 Investors in People Scotland

Mirroring the activities of Investors in People (IiP) in England, IiP is heavily promoted by bodies such as Scottish Enterprise and supported by training, mentoring and business support and is often required by funding bodies as a prerequisite for business development assistance.

IiP Scotland acts independently of IiP in England but is a ‘sibling’ organisation. Here the next levels available to IiP recognised businesses were investigated.

Once businesses have the initial IiP standard in place, challenge is then offered to organisations to increase the level of excellence beyond the original standard. Indeed three ‘advanced’ levels offer progressive improvement, thus allowing benchmarks to be continually challenged and improved upon. So too, specific units addressing advanced people management issues such as managing work-life balance, leadership and management and recruitment and selection are offered as an adjunct to the IiP standard proper.

Quality assurance mechanisms in assessment and performance management of contract assessors were investigated here. I found processes to be rigorous and supportive of the pursuit of excellence in assessment methods and objective measurement of organisation based procedures against the Standard. Mechanisms such as intensive initial assessor training, ongoing professional development and performance management reflected the IiP philosophy excellently.

Quite clearly the IiP standard in both England and Scotland supports the broader intention of respective governments to increase skills, develop productivity and engage all available labour in order to meet strategic objectives of economic growth and the maintenance of competitive advantage in global terms.
6.3 VisitScotland

As the national tourism agency for Scotland, VisitScotland is responsible for the marketing and quality assurance of the country's tourism product. Working with the very clear objective to communicate that tourism is, at all levels, “manifestly everyone’s business” (Peter Lederer, OBE, Chairman VisitScotland).

Working collaboratively as a network of regional offices across the country (including the Highlands and Islands) VisitScotland is primarily responsible to the Scottish Executive to ensure that 50% projected growth in revenue is realised by 2015. This is to be achieved by:

- Building Scotland’s tourism brand:
- Improving access in terms of transport and marketing message;
- Product development;
- Improving standards and implementing quality assurance;
- Commitment to training.

Of course, much of this is achieved in cooperation with Scottish Enterprise at both a strategic and operational level and supported by mechanisms such as the Investors in People standard.

However, the major focus remains squarely with industry to make things happen by being innovative and raising standards. Focus is maintained on delivering a cohesive tourism product to visitor expectations by integrating local priorities in regional areas with the overarching national strategy (i.e. action oriented Area Partnership Plans).

One of the most impressive elements of the VisitScotland activities is the focus on quality assurance. Quality grading is available across a wide range of tourism product from hotels to dining, from parks to caravan and holiday homes, from walking tracks to bothies and bods (basic hut type camping accommodation) and is supported by an advisory service to assist operators to meet required business standards. Comprehensive and rigorous measurement of product is conducted taking into consideration the physical attributes (such as amenities and facilities) as well as intangibles such as standard of service, ambience and standard of customer care. This is a positive shift away from a checklist of facilities approach to one of quality of product and is clearly customer service focused not amenity focused.

Following from this then is a realisation on the value of employee skills in offering excellence in service and is going some way to driving demand for increased training and professional development for tourism/hospitality personnel. Operators are becoming more aware of the
nexus between investing in employee training and skills development and increased profitability, return visitation and customer satisfaction.

A measure of the VisitScotland quality assurance programme’s success is the adoption of the scheme by England and Wales and has been investigated by international tourism bodies including that of New Zealand.

CASE IN POINT

In Tasmania the Tourism Council of Tasmania is responsible for the operation of the Tourism Accreditation scheme. The programme supports good business practice and accredits tourism operations based on a desk audit and site visit.

Whilst this is a good start, the programme lacks rigor through ongoing assessment and is unable to provide the level of support or business development training/mentoring to the degree of the VisitScotland programme.

Given greater funding and a mandate to increase the standard of business practice throughout the State the existing programme could be used as a platform on which to build a VisitScotland/IiP like structured approach to tourism/hospitality business improvement.

Benchmarking and continuous improvement could easily be implemented into the current system should development and industry agencies chose to support it.

6.4 People 1st

Somewhat similar to the Australian Industry Skills Councils, People 1st is a sector skills council responsible for providing a voice for the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector across England, Wales and Scotland. It is an employer driven organisation endorsed by government to represent industry and provide a link between government, business and educators. The primary mandate of People 1st is to reduce skills shortages and improve productivity and employability of people in the industry. Its strategic priorities include:

- Influencing the content, quality and delivery of education to meet current and future industry demand;
- Increase investment in professional development and training by working with employers and government funding bodies;
- Promote leadership and managerial practices at an industry level;
- Encourage partnerships between industry, educators and government agencies;
- Conduct research and gather intelligence to inform stakeholders of skills development needs of industry.

Whilst this is similar to the mandate of Service Skills in Australia (the services industries skill council which covers hospitality and tourism as well as other industries such as hairdressing,
Given that a ‘grass roots’ approach is more likely to bring about industry support and therefore a sense of ownership, it is suggested that the People 1st mechanisms and structure is more likely to achieve objectives such as industry support of training and professional development. A top down approach can lead to alienation of operators who find it difficult to engage with bureaucracy (especially the training and education sector and government) as it is perceived to be ‘talking a different language’ and has a different set of priorities.
7.0 Republic of Ireland

Major foci of investigation: - Fáilte Ireland
- Irish Hotels Federation
- Education Providers and Government

7.1 Fáilte Ireland

From an environment of emigration, rising national debt and declining employment an amazing Irish economic turnaround was largely brought about by a series of multilateral agreements across business, government and unions and via the prudent use of European Union assistance. The Celtic Tiger returned stunning economic results, doubling the European Union average for growth, employment grew and inflation fell.

Throughout the 1990's the Irish economy boomed and tourism, in particular, returned double digit growth and now ranks as one of the Republic's largest industries valued at €5 billion supporting some 150,000 jobs.

Fáilte Ireland was formed from the integration of Bord Fáilte (domestic marketing and product development department) and CERT (hospitality training). Together the development authority has the mandate of promoting and supporting the Irish tourism industry (hospitality and tourism are used synonymously) and identifies a number of critical areas of responsibility including:

- Identification and development of business opportunities;
- Benchmarking competitors and monitoring Irish performance;
- Promoting best practice in tourism;
- Establishing and promoting customer service excellence;
- Building capability at all levels of the industry;

The synergy derived from melding marketing (including product development) with training and education can not be understated. It is a common sense approach that unifies the direction of two imperatives of hospitality and tourism product delivery and cements the concept that people can not be taken out of the product delivery equation.

Training and education is delivered across all levels including basic skills development short courses, craft certificate courses, advanced and higher certificate courses and degree courses. Professional development for management level employees is also offered by Fáilte Ireland.

The following table illustrates the structure of vocational and higher education; suggesting approximate equivalents in the Australian context.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Approx. Aust. Equivalent</th>
<th>Delivered by</th>
<th>Course Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entry level/basic skills only</strong></td>
<td>National Skills Certificate</td>
<td>Short courses UP to AQF Cert II</td>
<td>Fáilte Ireland training centres around Ireland</td>
<td>13-16 weeks full time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Craft Level</strong> (recognising the weight of skills required to work in the industry)</td>
<td>Craft Certificate</td>
<td>AQF Cert II-III</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology</td>
<td>1-2 years full time (some courses ½ college based and ½ compulsory workplace based)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisory – Early Management</strong></td>
<td>Advanced National Certificate/ Higher Certificate</td>
<td>AQF IV - Diploma</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology</td>
<td>8-20 weeks full time or 1 year with day release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher Certificate 2 years with day release</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum requirements for previous working experience in the industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td>Degree Course</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Institutes of Technology/private providers eg Shannon College of Hotel Management</td>
<td>3 years with some minimum entry requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trainee Manager Development Programme</strong></td>
<td>Certification recognised by Fáilte Ireland, Irish Hotels and Catering Institute. Accredited by HCIMA and IHCI. (i.e. fully recognised and supported by international industry bodies)</td>
<td>Traineeship to Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>Institute of Technology</td>
<td>3 year distance education with day release to attend lectures. Delivered in tandem with ‘host’ hotel and fully supported by curriculum and on the job training. Articulates to National Diploma in Business Studies (Hotel and Catering Mgt)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On the Job Traineeship</strong></td>
<td>National Traineeship in Hosp Operations and Supervision (Hotel and Restaurant)</td>
<td>AQF III-IV</td>
<td>Colleges and Industry</td>
<td>2 years combining day release, block release and on the job training. Entry conditions apply including 3 months relevant work experience and school leaving certificate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arguments for and against competency based training as opposed to curriculum based vocational education are complex convoluted and not warranted here. However, some of the advantages to structuring training in this manner compared with a straight competency based system supported by training packages (as in Australia) are:

- Endorsed curriculum underpins a consistent delivery of education and skills training allowing all delivery to be recognised by industry, educators, quality assurance assessors and students.

That is, all are aware of what is delivered, how it is delivered and the outcomes (i.e. skills and knowledge) are identified. This is currently lacking in the Australian system. Flexible delivery to training package performance criteria means ‘competency’ can be gained in a myriad of ways, providing difficulties for employers as delivery and assessment contexts are non standard. (i.e. Employers don’t know where or how or within what context ‘competency’ was achieved);

- A blend of on the job and block release to undertake formal education can increase assessment rigor, standardises underpinning knowledge and allows for a much broader scope of education;

- Course delivery times are somewhat more prescriptive and can be longer compared to some of our flexible training options, suggesting that more emphasis is placed on the ‘craft’ recognition of hospitality and tourism skills (i.e. not just a course to fill in some time and that skills and knowledge do actually take time to develop);

- Prerequisite experience suggests that the courses accept only those people dedicated to pursuing a job or career in the industry, thus reducing attrition from the course and subsequently the industry;

- Structured on the job training with day release for some courses brings an onus of engagement to the workplace and the employer. Something I believe is seriously lacking and not adequately addressed by the current training (and training funding) system in Australia.

Rigor of assessment, a blend of curriculum and competency based education, work experience entry requirements and industry professional recognition paints this model as one that perhaps Australia should be looking to if improvement to our flexible, but inconsistent assessment system is to be considered.

Professional development for managers in the industry is also managed by Fáilte Ireland. The Management Development Programme is delivered in conjunction with Cornell University. It delivers modules covering general management, human resources management, finance, strategy and marketing and operations management. The programme includes web based distance learning, tutorial and an international site visit.
So too, other short courses including customer care, responsible service of alcohol, cost management, food safety, hazard analysis and supervisory skills are also available for people already in industry.

However, one of the most interesting products of Fáilte Ireland is the new Optimus programme. Introduced only in the last few months, Optimus is a quality assurance programme designed to develop best practice business management for tourism and hospitality operations. Three levels of achievement are available; Ireland’s Best Award, Mark of Best Practice and Award of Excellence. Like the IiP or Hospitality Assured programmes in the UK, Optimus supports business by mentoring, providing a framework of businesses management practice and incorporates human resources management and development into the very fabric of business management.

I believe that this programme should be one that Australia and particularly Tasmania could look to for inspiration to improve its own business development objectives.

Despite the clearly impressive growth and success that Ireland has made through marketing, education and business support the ‘flip side’ of that success is now starting to bite.

The marketing promise delivered to the travelling public of Ireland is unique and distinctly ‘Irish’; rolling green hills, Guinness ‘culture’ and Irish banter are all experiential and intangible elements of the visitor expectation. However, massive growth has led to labour and skills shortages. The answer to this problem was and still is one of importation. Thousands of non-Irish nationals, especially those from Eastern Europe (given the freedom of movement allowed to labour in the EU) have changed the face of Irish hospitality. Whereas once one may have consistently been greeted with a broad smile and thick Dublin brogue, one may now be greeted with a Polish, Czech or Estonian accent (and, occasionally, an Australian one!). This is not a problem in itself and should not be interpreted as being racist. But it represents a deviation from the ‘expectation’ that visitors may have developed, and therefore it becomes a marketing and product issue.

The predicament faced by Ireland, Scotland and England is that foreign nationals fill front line jobs because:

- The local people perceive the industry to be low skilled;
• The industry is perceived to be low paid;
• The work is poorly respected and seen to have little or no career progression opportunity;
• Long, odd working hours may not suit families and women with child care/other caring responsibilities;
• Hospitality and tourism is not seen to be a career of choice.

However, foreign nationals looking for opportunity are happy to fill such vacancies and have done so in their droves. This is not an issue in itself, but as they become more proficient at the language, assimilate into the culture and look to career progression themselves, they exit the industry to find other work. And so the cycle starts again.

We, in Australia, do not have the option of wholesale importation of labour to our industry despite facing the same issues. Our best hope then is to avoid temporary measures (such as importation of labour) and look to rectifying the underlying issues that either force people out of the industry or fail to attract them in the first instance. Implementing best practice business management models can assist with this challenge by:

• Up-skilling managers to embrace best practice management across the industry;
• Recognising that issues such as the provision of ‘family friendlier policies’ must be addressed if we are to keep women (in particular) in the industry;
• Addressing the issue of provision of professional development to better equip all staff to meet the demands of a growing and diverse customer base;
• Improving conditions (eg. reduce casualisation by conversion to permanent full time or part time work where possible);
• Improving the perception of the industry by education and workplace/management culture change;
• Addressing the criticisms of the current training and assessment framework by lobbying providers and government agencies to improve rigor and consistency of delivery and assessment of training;
• Encouraging people to stay in the industry by better access to rewarding career pathways;
• Encouraging better managed businesses. This increases entry barriers to incompetent operators as industry becomes more self regulating in terms of requisite professionalism thus leading to a more sustainable industry overall.

I believe that if Australia and Tasmania in particular can address and alleviate these issues we have a very real opportunity of designing world’s best practice in hospitality and tourism management; giving us a sustainable competitive advantage.

Overall, I was very impressed with the consolidated approach to education, business development and business support provided by Fáilte Ireland to industry. We could, and should, learn a lot from them.
7.2 Irish Hotels Federation

The Irish Hotels Federation (IHF) is the peak employer body representing some 1000 hotels and guest houses throughout the Republic of Ireland. Its major responsibilities lie with representing the voice of operators as a lobby group, improving access to Ireland, representing operators on issues such as work permits for foreign workers, taxation and hotel classification. So too, the IHF supports managerial professional development through structured and recognised University courses as well as supporting the Fáilte Ireland Trainee Manager Development Programme.

One of the most interesting projects undertaken by the IHF, however, is the Quality Employer Programme.

For the reasons already outlined, the hospitality and tourism industry needs to change if it is to attract, retain and capitalise on good people. To do this business need to look to their own operations and management processes at a grass roots level.

The Quality Employer Programme (QEP) assists operators to improve their business management processes especially in regard to employees. It offers a guide to implementing simple practices that go some way to improving the workplace. Supported by a CD-rom of materials, proformas and information, the programme assists businesses to become better employers, thus able to attract and keep better calibre staff, which in turn improves productivity and profitability. It makes perfect sense. Mentoring assistance is available from the IHF free of charge and employers are able to go at their own pace. Once successfully assessed, employers can use the QEP logo as a marketing tool to attract staff and customers.

This is a simple but effective initiative to improve the industry where it matters – at the operator level. I intend to ‘agitate’ industry and government bodies to support such an initiative in Tasmania.

7.3 Education Providers and Government

It would be very easy for me to continue on ad infinitum about the things I learned whilst in Ireland. However, space and time restricts this. What I would like to communicate though is the level of integration of industry and development agency strategy and subsequent application to achieve outcomes. Clearly the mandate comes from the top.
Speaking with Kieran Sheedy of the Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism it was very clear that tourism is seen to be a serious and weighty contributor to the sustained economic growth of the country. As such his department has a very strong representation at government level and is very proactive in ensuring that other portfolio areas are aware of any impact on tourism resulting from policy changes. So too, funding for tourism related initiatives is available; especially where education, training and business development is concerned.

It seemed to me that rather than viewing tourism as a nice, fluffy, feel good portfolio it was recognised as being the bone fide economic sector that deserves professional and serious business level support just as manufacturing, IT and agriculture. As such, the department devolves the responsibility for achieving outcomes to bodies that are adequately funded and effectively equipped to carry out the determined strategic plans generated at the highest levels of government.

Whilst in Ireland and Scotland I met with a raft of educators from various institutions. I gathered information on curriculum and competency based models of delivery as well as reviewing issues that are shared by Australia. These issues included the attrition from the industry soon after exiting education and expectations of graduates that may be deviant from actual experiences once in industry. I am currently undertaking academic research in this area to ascertain a method of reducing attrition and moderating expectations to more closely align student and workplace ‘reality’.

One point that was oft repeated in Ireland, Scotland and England was that integration of curriculum and competency based training/education was the ideal. Go too far along the continuum to either extreme and one loses rigor and consistency or gains a system of assessment that is invalid and poorly aligned to workplace needs.

Given that the vocational education and training system in Australia has been committed to the National Training Packages for some time it is imperative that flexibility afforded by this system is also tempered with some rigor of assessment and consistency of delivery/context. Given that much criticism has been made of the system and training outcomes recently (see the Hospitality and Tourism Training Demand Profile Update 2003) I believe that a review of the effectiveness of competency based delivery and assessment (especially past operational levels, say Certificate III) should be undertaken and consideration of incorporating broadly based endorsed curriculum included.
8.0 Disneyworld. Orlando, Florida

8.1 The Disney Approach To Loyalty.

One of the hardest parts about undertaking this Churchill Fellowship was convincing people I was going to Disneyworld to study! But study I did.

For three and a half days facilitators from The Disney Institute (yes, it is a bona fide educational institution) outlined how Disneyworld maintains the loyalty of its customers through generating loyalty from its staff, or cast members as they are called.

It is a simple equation, keep your people engaged with the company, train and encourage consistent standards, reward and recognise excellence, saturate the environment with a vision and construct all managerial processes with the same vision. It sounds easy. It sounds like many management text books. It seems all too commonplace. But the truth is, so few companies do this, though they try and perhaps pretend that they do.

Disney’s key success in this area revolves around some basic concepts that have been lost in modern management. They are:

- Have a clear and well communicated vision about what the business is and what it wants to achieve (i.e. make people happy);
- Implement a culture by design (i.e. all management structures clearly underpin the vision- even the language is Disney. For example, employees are cast members, back of house and front of house are back stage and front stage, there is no human resources department only central casting, no uniforms only costumes etc.);
- Reward your people (i.e. Castmembers reported that wages were commensurate with industry standards, but incentives and inclusions such as health insurance, free passes and travel discounts made the difference.);
- Allow your people to achieve the vision (eg. cast members are encouraged to go the extra distance and people are recruited based on the acceptance of the company vision and very high standards);
- Have fun. Cast members wear Mickey ears to work; they converse and joke with guests and seem to genuinely enjoy their work.

Again, this sounds simple. But in a workplace (Disneyworld, Orlando only) with over 55,000 cast members, achieving it consistently for over fifty years is an amazing accomplishment.
There is an enduring feeling that the Walt Disney vision is embedded in the walls, the floor the characters and the cast members. There is a distinct separation of task and purpose for employees. For example, a cast member may be employed to sell popcorn or run a theme park ride, but that does not define their role. Their purpose or role in the workplace is completely aligned to the vision - to make people happy. And I tested it. I interviewed around twenty cast members from all over Disneyworld and I kept coming back to the same thing. They were there to make people happy and they loved it. They genuinely loved their jobs. Now that’s something we need to emulate.

Whilst I picked up no extra skills in terms of theory or management technique, I found that the most simple and oft quoted management rhetoric is actually done at Disney and done very, very well. And to the tune of a better bottom line. Make no mistake, Disney is about making money; it is a business after all. But it realises that it can sustain profitability and market share only through its people.

An acid test of the total admiration of the way in which loyalty is generated can be communicated through this anecdote. The facilitator was asked how the parks are kept so immaculately clean. The answer was, “We have around 55,000 cleaners working for us.” “Wow!” the questioner said, “how many staff do you have then?” He answered, “Around 55,000. Each and every one has the responsibility to pick up trash. The process is really complicated,” he went on with a smile, “Yeah, we tell all of our cast members – ‘you see a piece of trash, and you pick it up!!’.”

Now that sounds simple. But think about the times have you walked past a piece of rubbish in the workplace and left it for someone else to pick up because it’s not your job. We’ve all done it. By the end of the course we, as participants, were picking up trash!!! Such was the impact of the message and such was the power of the concept of loyalty.

I’ve done a lot of professional development and I have a number of qualifications, but the combination of theory and site visits (yes, we got to go to the parks and visit the front stage and back stage areas) in this iconic and unique environment really opened my eyes to what hospitality management was really about. People.
CASE IN POINT

Housekeepers rarely see the hotel guests so it is difficult for them to create a relationship that adds to the guest’s experience. However, Disney encourages backstage staff to be creative to engage with the guest.

For example, I had some Disney character toys that I kept by the clock radio by my bed. Each day I would come back to the room to find them in various poses as if they were secretly having a party whilst I was out.

I found out that housekeepers often do this, especially with children’s toys, to help perpetuate the magic of Disney. Children come back to their hotel room after a day out in the parks and find their Mickey Mouse toy watching television, complete with remote control in hand. Or Donald Duck in an empty bath surrounded by tissues. It’s simple stuff, but absolutely memorable and unique.

Herein lies the task - purpose differentiation.

Their job/task is to clean my room. Their purpose is to make me happy.


9.0 Conclusion & Recommendations

During the six weeks of my Fellowship to the UK, Ireland and Disney I was consistently reminded of the complexity and enormity of the challenge we (the tourism and hospitality industry) have ahead of us. We exist in a global community of competitors who are facing similar issues and who are all looking to achieve competitive advantage.

We are facing major labour shortages and suffer a similar poor image among jobseekers. Our structural systems of business management face the similar internal challenges such as rising labour costs, time critical customer service issues and increased customer demands. Our market is becoming increasingly sophisticated and time poor; resulting in a very discerning patron with money to spend but little time in which to spend it. Management of our businesses is becoming increasingly complex and requiring of a different set of professional skills, but with many existing managers somewhat reticent to accept that fact or with little time for education, professionalism is not keeping up with consumer sophistication.

Toward the end of my time in Ireland I became a little despondent, for I felt that whilst I saw a raft of excellent initiatives, programmes and structures in place it seemed to me that we still have a long way to go in Australia and Tasmania in particular if we are to really get serious about making our industry great. However, I then looked at the problem from another perspective. If we could put into place initiatives based on those seen, used and proven overseas we would have the opportunity to build answers to universal problems from the inside.

Long term problems such as an aging population and labour shortages can not be fixed by short term initiatives such as importing labour.

Problems of poor perception of the industry can not be fixed by just telling people “really, it’s a great job in the tourism/hospitality industry!” the industry needs to change to become more attractive to arrest attrition and to attract bright, innovative individuals for the long term, not just a job for the summer.

Industry as a whole needs to get smarter about ongoing education especially of managerial staff if it is to keep pace with a dynamic consumer demand for premium product. So too, responsibility for education and training must become an issue of business not government or
educators. These entities can support business, but essentially if industry wants properly skilled, productive, motivated and loyal staff they need to get serious about their role as it is a central and imperative one. A role that encourages and supports continued professional development and proficiency in the provision of customer service at all levels.

It is essential that our own industry culture, that largely currently supports the image of low paid, low skilled, low commitment workplaces, uses mechanisms for better business management (eg. Optimus, iIP, Hospitality Assured etc.) to improve return on investment in people as well as capital to build profitable businesses from the inside. A poorly run business can not support HRM or HRD processes that are essential for a successful hospitality/tourism operation. We need to get smarter at attracting people from non traditional sources such as the older demographic, married women with children (i.e. encourage them back to the workforce) and people from ethnic communities. But we need to offer them a reason to work with us - something different to what is offered now.

Opportunities for benchmarking and continuous improvement should be welcomed and encouraged by industry bodies to illustrate that those businesses doing things effectively across all business management elements (including HRM & HRD) will attract the best applicants, thus perpetuating business success. Those who falter and retain poor practices will be those who find it difficult to fill job vacancies and subsequently lose customers. However, it is these businesses that taint the image of the industry as a whole and should be encouraged to change or to exit the industry through mechanisms such as the VisitScotland quality assurance programme.

Vocational education and training needs to be reviewed. In Tasmania, strong criticism of institutional providers has forced some changes, but the issues are not with educators per se. I believe the competency based system needs to be evaluated to ensure that those issued with qualifications are truly able to undertake duties for which they have been deemed competent. Industry suggests this is not the case at the moment. So we need to look to the outcome of training and assessment not just the inputs (i.e. a set of recognised competencies does not make a competent employee in a holistic sense).

An integrated, concerted approach that clearly states the responsibilities of government agencies (eg. development and tourism portfolios in particular), industry bodies (such as the Tourism Council, Australian Hotels Association and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry)
and educators (private and public) must be in place. Such as mechanism works well in both Scotland and Ireland.

Targeted funding must support initiatives underpinning a commitment to skill development and professional education on an ongoing basis. Business should be rewarded and assisted to invest in people not just infrastructure and assistance to develop business management excellence should be incorporated to any funding for product development. Evaluation and benchmarking should be underpinned by a resolute effort to encourage quality assurance and continuous improvement. A serious commitment to overall business management excellence and efficiency must be supported by industry and government and recalcitrant or poor operators should be excluded from funding and marketing assistance unless an effort to improve is made. So few barriers to entry exist, but continuing a business in this industry should be subject to quality and business management standards.

This is a lot to achieve and some may find my comments harsh. But we exist in a dynamic, time critical industry and our customers expect and deserve service and product excellence. And I don’t believe that such change is impossible. Absolutely challenging, but not impossible.

However, only a concerted effort can achieve positive outcomes in the following areas:

- Improved conditions for hospitality/tourism employees through better human resource/business management practices (eg. recognition that family friendly policies, flexible work arrangements and entitlements may lure employees from other industries and keep current employees in our workplaces);

- Non traditional sources of labour and the ‘underemployed’ need to be accessed and engaged, requiring creativity and flexibility to current workplace standards, work arrangement and culture;

- Improved perception of the industry (ie. become an employer of choice);
  
  (I am currently working on a project with the Tasmanian branch of the AHA to address such issues)

- Improved vocational pathways (ie. career progression, professional development etc);

- Managerial skill development from the smallest micro business to the large;
  
  (Currently working on a management training programme with Network Gaming)

- Improved recognition of professional achievement and skills through professional associations (eg. HCIMA, Scotland’s Service Excellence Passport);
Implementation of best practice business management (including marketing, HRM, financial management, risk management and quality assurance etc) by utilising programmes such as liP, Optimus and Hospitality Assured;  
(Hoping to start work on a pilot programme in 2006.)

Serious quality control of operators (eg. a shift away from recognition of amenities to business management practices, customer service delivery, quality assurance and continuous improvement);  
(Hoping to start work on a pilot programme in 2006 based on the current Tasmanian accreditation programme. Subject to funding)

Improved rigor in delivery and assessment of hospitality/tourism education (eg. competency based delivery and assessment loses effectiveness and validity as tasks become more complex and ambiguous as in most managerial applications {Wheelahan & Carter, 2001});  
(I am an active supporter of vocational education and training improvement and represent my own registered training organisation in various fora)

Greater emphasis on the ‘employability skills’ and recognition of the role of emotional labour as well as entry level practical skills at a VET in schools level;  
(I am currently working on a project with the Tasmanian branch of the AHA to address such issues)

Assimilation of marketing intelligence with product development (eg. a move away from operator driven product to consumer driven product);

Improvement of the quality tourism product offering and look to high yield, premium product to alleviate the ‘cheap destination’ tag we may currently be suffering from;

Streamline initiatives and funding across providers/funding bodies for better focus on outcome and maximum achievement of goals as well as communication of intent;

Better understanding of the suite of practical, interpersonal and emotional skills required of staff in the industry by business, the general public and educators;  
(I am currently working on a project with the Tasmanian branch of the AHA to address such issues and currently undertaking academic research on this topic)

Support for regional areas. (eg. recruitment, training, business practices support etc);

Encourage more cooperative funding and support arrangements from Government, employer bodies and industry representatives;  
(I hope to be in contact with bodies such as Tourism Tasmania, the Dept of Economic Development and Office of Post Compulsory Education and Training and industry bodies regarding this issue)
Overall, I hope to communicate my findings by using existing networks (University of Tasmania, Australian Human Resources Institute, AHA and TCT as well as current industry clients) and to develop future channels of communication with government bodies and interested parties.

Travelling overseas not only allows one to see what is excellent in other places, it also allows one the perspective to see what is excellent about one’s own home. We have some challenges and should look to what others have achieved, but we should not ignore what is inherently good about ourselves. I believe that we have the opportunity to be better at what we do and in meeting the challenges ahead our industry can achieve world’s best practice and truly achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

It seems appropriate that I should conclude with an appropriate quote from Winston Churchill; “difficulties mastered are opportunities won.” I hope that this report will generate at least a little thought toward overcoming our difficulties to grasp the opportunities that have present themselves.
References


Ruddy, J. 2005. Speech notes – source unknown


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