

Skills Development



INFOSHEET

Skills development, also called human resource development is a major part of modern day education and work. There are benefits in skills development for the individual, for business, for customers and for the economy.

Individuals who undertake skills development education or training are more likely to be employed and more likely to have a higher paid job than those who don't. Skills are portable – an individual can take them away. That means individuals can move more freely between jobs, seek skills and responsibility-based promotions, do better at their job, gain more job satisfaction, and adapt to change more quickly and better. Self improvement is a benefit in its own right – life is more interesting when learning new things – as a result it improves confidence and self esteem.

For **businesses**, skills development programs can actually prevent business failure. The lack of management and industry specific skills is a common cause of business failure within the first 12 months of operation. Business managers benefit by defining their skills gaps and recruiting appropriately. Improvements flow through to the product (in tourism it is often the quality of service), staff morale and recognition of staff assets, communication between employers and employees, customer satisfaction, productivity and profitability. Skills development programs reduce staff turnover and associated costs, workplace accidents and absenteeism.

The **customer** benefits through better quality service – their needs, expectations and issues are identified and addressed. A skilled workplace is a safer and better environment for all.

In Australia our future prosperity depends on a skilled and flexible workforce to be **globally competitive**. A knowledge-based economy has emerged, transforming existing industries as well as creating new ones. Skills development gives staff an increasingly required balance of generic and work specific competencies, interpersonal skills and personal attributes. People are finding that if they develop a culture of lifelong learning and training to keep up with emerging industry needs they are gaining job security.

Both international and national research indicated that the increase in labour productivity resulting from targeted training can yield an investment of more than 30 per cent. The web site www.training.com.au provides a useful tool to help estimate the potential return on training investment, by using the return-on-investment calculator.

Key knowledge, skills and attitudes required for success in the tourism industry

The following is only a guide to suggested key knowledge, skills and attitudes areas required by the target groups to operate effectively in the tourism industry and tourism related organisations.

Knowledge – consists of the facts, concepts or principles which are required to competently perform an activity.

Skills – the mental or physical abilities required to competently perform an activity.

Attitudes – a predisposition to behave in certain ways to competently perform an activity. They include standards of behaviour, values and beliefs.

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Federal, and State Government

Position	Agency or group	Key knowledge, skills and attitudes						
		Introduction to tourism	Business management	Tourism and retail operations	Sector-specific knowledge & skills	Tourism development	Community engagement	Tourism policy and planning
Government planning, policy, development, project officers	<p>Tourism Queensland – Market Development Specialists, Regional Directors and Coordinators</p> <p>Department of Education, Training and the Arts – Regional Planning Officers</p> <p>Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry – Rural Business Advisers, State Development Officers</p> <p>Department of Primary Industries – Rural and Regional Officers</p> <p>Other agencies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Employment and Industrial Relations • Arts Queensland • Environmental Protection Agency • Office of Gaming Regulation • Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy 	•				•	•	•

Local Government

Agency	Officer	Key knowledge, skills and attitudes						
		Introduction to tourism	Business management	Tourism and retail operations	Sector-specific knowledge & skills	Tourism development	Community engagement	Tourism policy and planning
Local government authorities	Local government officers	•				•	•	•
Local government authorities	Local government councillors	•				•		

Tourism industry

Agency	Officer	Key knowledge, skills and attitudes						
		Introduction tourism	Business management	Tourism and retail operations	Sector-specific knowledge & skills	Tourism development	Community engagement	Tourism policy and planning
Tourism businesses	Owners and managers	•	•	•	•			
Local and regional tourism organisations	Managers and officers	•	•	•		•	•	•
Attractions, accommodation, transport	Tourism employees	•	•	•	•			
Visitor information centres	Managers and staff	•	•	•	•		•	
Tours	Guides and driver guides	•	•	•	•			
Special events	Staff	•	•	•	•		•	
Indigenous tourism organisations	Operators and officers	•	•	•	•		•	
Wholesale and retail travel organisations	Operators	•	•	•	•			
Licensed venues, for example, hotels, restaurants and clubs	Staff	•	•	•	•			
Retail organisations	Staff	•	•	•	•			

Community and schools

Agency	Officer	Key knowledge, skills and attitudes						
		Introduction tourism	Business management	Tourism and retail operations	Sector-specific knowledge & skills	Tourism development	Community engagement	Tourism policy and planning
Community	Members generally such as residents	•						
Community	Volunteers	•		•	•			
Schools	Administration, teachers and students	•			•		•	

Customer service

Tourism is a 'people' industry. Customer service is critical. The higher the level of customer service, the more likely a business will create a favourable and memorable impression, creating good word of mouth and return business.

Customers start forming their experience once they walk in the door and build on that, either positively or negatively, for the rest of their stay. Customer service must be seriously integrated into the business's day-to-day thinking and activities.

Highly-skilled staff know what different visitors want from their experience. Everyone within the tourism operation (from the shop front, office to business owner) has the potential to impress customers and need to understand how their communications and attitudes affect others (peers as well as customers). This is where skills development, together with the right personality and touch of commonsense, can provide a framework to guarantee a positive result.

Skills areas that can be developed include:

- quality customer care, what it is and how to do it
- how to understand customer perceptions and expectations and manage customer motivations
- understanding causes of customer dissatisfaction, recognising and avoiding obstacles to quality service
- interpersonal skills, managing difficult people and situations
- how to communicate effectively
- improving self-esteem, self-image, attitudes, beliefs and taking responsibility.

AussieHost

AussieHost is a nationally recognised customer service training program that focuses on interpersonal communications, customer relations and service. It builds personal, professional and community pride and inspires a greater commitment to providing better service.

AussieHost's unique approach focuses not only on skill development, but on versatility, innovation, self reliance and self confidence. It ensures that the individual takes responsibility for their service delivery.

Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) is responsible for the management of the AussieHost program in Queensland and has engaged regional Providers and Trainers to deliver the program throughout the state.

Linguistic and cross-cultural skills

In the year to 30 September 2003 Queensland was visited by approximately 1.08 million tourists from non-English speaking countries (Bureau of Tourism Research). They came from Europe, East Asia, South-East Asia, South Asia, South America, the Pacific and Africa.

While many of these tourists speak well enough to get by without help, there are others who have very little English. In these cases tourism operators have a duty of care to know how to access professional interpreter services if an emergency arises.

Cross-cultural issues are part and parcel of the tourism industry – experiencing another culture is one of the main reasons that people travel to other countries for their holidays. Understanding of how cultural factors can affect the visitor's experience is a necessary component of tourism planning, marketing, and delivery.

An ability to recognise and deal with cultural factors will reduce stress, as well as improve the quality of the interaction between staff and visitors.

Cultural factors affecting tourism include:

- what types of experiences that people from particular countries or cultures are looking for when they visit
- attitudes to punctuality, program flexibility, tour commentaries and so forth can vary a lot from culture to culture
- individual and socio-economic variations within cultural groups
- the way politeness, respect and courtesy are demonstrated can be very different.

REFERENCES

AussieHost

www.qtic.com.au/aussiehost

Cross cultural consultancy, information and training

Type	Location	Information
Consultancies	Regional cities	Locally-based tourism consultants specialise in providing cultural information about different tourism markets.
Ethnic Communities	Regional centres www.multicultural.qld.gov.au	Ethnic communities provide a wealth of local cross-cultural and language skills. Most Queensland towns have a surprising range of ethnic backgrounds represented in the local residents who have immigrated to Queensland from almost all the source countries for non-English speaking background tourists. See the Queensland Multicultural Resource Directory
Local Training Providers	www.multicultural.qld.gov.au	Multicultural Affairs Queensland can supply information on how to identify local training providers.
Multicultural Affairs Queensland	Tel: 07 3224 5691 www.multicultural.qld.gov.au	Includes details on when and how to access Translating and Interpreting Service 1800 053 739.
Department of Immigration and Citizenship	www.immi.gov.au/tis	Translating and Interpreting Service 13 14 50.

Skills development organisational framework

National
<p>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocational Education and Training Division – responsible for industry training, new apprenticeships • Higher Education Division • Schools Division • Leads and coordinates nationally consistent approaches to training across States and Territories, including development of national training packages. Funds research.
<p>Services Industry Skills Council – advises federal government about industry training needs.</p>
<p>National Centre for Vocational Education Research – collates and publishes national training system statistics. Undertakes research.</p>
<p>Australian Council of Private Education and Training – peak national body of private training providers.</p>
State
<p>Department of Education, Training and the Arts – within the national framework, develops and implements training policy. Responsible for planning, funding, monitoring public funded training, regulation of formal training system, public and private.</p>
<p>Multicultural Affairs Queensland – provides generalist advice on cross-cultural awareness and communication skills, as well as language service issues.</p>
<p>TAFE Queensland – commonly involved in implementation of training packages, professional development of teachers, moderation of training/assessment etc. Delivery of public funded programs plus commercial activities and industry joint ventures.</p>
<p>Education Queensland – provides instruction to all students in years 1 to 12 who attend Queensland government schools.</p>
<p>QTIC Skills Link – advises Queensland Government and training providers about industry training needs. Advises industry about the training system. Promotes training. Develops and provides products and services for industry trainers.</p>

Regional

Department of Education, Training and the Arts regional offices (6 across Queensland) – responsible for planning, implementation and regulation of training at a regional level.

Universities – provide higher education – see Infosheet 5

TAFE Institutes – provide services at the regional level, consult with local industry/community, develop training to meet local needs, comply with national training criteria. – see Infosheet 5

Private training providers – comply with national training criteria.

Group Training Organisations – are legal employers of apprentices and trainees. They place individuals in different businesses (called host employers) on a short or long term basis. They provide at cost field support officers, job rotation of trainee/employees, just in time supplying and networking for employers.

Local

TAFE – regional institute has satellite campuses serving local industries and communities

University campuses

Skill centres

Learning centres

Private training providers