

Prospects of Training & Development in Tourism Sector

The Current Scenario.

AUTHOR

Dr. Shalini Garg
Senior Lecturer,
Management, G.G.S.
Indraprastha
University, Delhi

ABSTRACT

Tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry. It is also the biggest in terms of employment. Commonly associated with 'fun', tourism is a major industry in its own right. It is probably unmatched in terms of the diversity of the sectors it embraces such as hotels, travel agencies, airlines, restaurants, shops, resorts, conventions and so no. In fact, its very diversity of sectors underscores the intrinsic uniqueness of the industry – the multi – component nature of the visitor experience. Developing tourism as an industry is thus critical, and an effective and far reaching industrial strategy is required. The present paper is an effort in this direction, which stress upon the role of training & development in fostering professionalism in the business of travel and tourism.

1. TOURISM SECTOR: PRESENT SCENARIO

The tourism industry has mushroomed phenomenally in the last few decades and has become an important factor in the economy of many nations. It has emerged as the world's largest export industry and has become a unique instrument for economic development as well as for promoting social integration and international understanding. Over the years, its importance as a major source of contribution to the improvement of balance of payment and for creation of new business opportunities, employment generation, ecological conservation and regeneration as well as for percolation of economic benefits to the weaker sections of the society has been increasing tremendously.

In spite of this the tourism sector is challenged by a growing demand for customer orientation, increasing international competition, volatile markets in an insecure environment, changing

- customer demands towards
- individualization and significant potential in
- various market segment. Today, several
- problems exist in tourism sector including:
 - Low wages, high demand for staff
 - flexibility, little training provision, high staff
 - turnover, skill shortages.
 - Qualifications from the tourism sector
 - are much appreciated by other sectors
 - (customer orientation etc.) and
 - qualifications from other sectors are useful
 - for tourism.
 - Many qualified employees leave the
 - sector and many trained tourism school
 - graduates do not enter the sector, leading
 - to a sheer waste of resources and skills.
 - Forecasting skills will be needed in
 - future under conditions of sector volatility
 - and vulnerability.
 - Multi-skilling, newly emerging and
 - hybrid occupations reflect the trends for
 - new types of services and growing
 - demand for flexibility.
 - The situation today is that the
 - industry itself still does not have a clear

JOURNAL OF
COMMERCE
& TRADE

Numerous institutions have sprung up purporting to offer courses at various levels in travel, tourism, catering, hotel and institutional management.

and adequate operational framework. The training is largely carried out in haphazard and uncoordinated manner. There are concerns about the sub-optimal state of tourism education and training and the associated skills shortage. Many of the students who graduate from tourism colleges are ill-equipped to comprehend the dynamics of globalization and its subsequent effects on the industry. This is despite the fact that improving the skills and knowledge of the workforce can assist destination competitiveness and help to establish and maintain a viable industry.

Numerous institutions have sprung up purporting to offer courses at various levels in travel, tourism, catering, hotel and institutional management. However, most of them lack basic training facilities and not meet acceptable standards. They spew out graduates whose knowledge is questionable as there is no centralized examination or certification. In the face of such expansion, questions have often been raised about the level, scope and quality of tourism training and education in the country. There is therefore a need to come up with a uniform curriculum that is not only acceptable to all the industry participants, but which is also competitive both locally and internationally.

Therefore, both quality and quantity tourism requires trained personnel to man the various positions in the industry. The need for skills, knowledge and vision is being felt more and more today. With new offers and services emerging in tourism, the need for adequately qualified staff becomes even more critical. Thus, Training and Development plays an important role in developing professionalism in the business of travel and tourism.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

From the Department of Employment 'Glossary of Training Terms' (1978, 2nd Edition), the definitions of terms that are going to be commonly used are given below:

Training – A planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge/skill/ attitude through learning experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to enable an individual to acquire abilities in order that he or she can perform adequately a given task or job.

Learning – The process whereby individuals acquire knowledge, skill and attitudes through experience, reflection study or instruction.

Education – A process and a series of activities which aim at enabling an individual to assimilate and develop knowledge, skills, values and understandings that are not simply related to a narrow fields of activity but allow a broad range of problems to be defined, analyzed and solved.

Development – The general enhancement and growth of an individual's skills and abilities through conscious and unconscious learning.

Terms related to the travel and tourism industry that have been frequently used (*Source: Travel Agency and Tour Operation: Concepts and Principles by Jagmohan Negi, 1998):

Travel/Tourism industry – The words Travel Industry and tourism industry have been used interchangeably. They refer to the industry made up of businesses the provide travel – related services.

A comprehensive definition of

training formulated by the Manpower Services Commission (1981) is as follows: "A planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization."

The Manpower Services Commission definition of Development is: "The growth or realization of a person's ability, through conscious or unconscious learning. Development programmes usually include elements of planned study and experience, and are frequently supported by a coaching and counseling facility."

Christopher and Smith (2005) state that...training is supposed to do the following:

Develop employees' skills, abilities and performance and thus improve product quality and quantity (whether the product be goods or services) on individuals, group and organization levels.

Help fill present and future workforce needs and create a more flexible workforce through such programmes as development.

Maintain a high performance as possible, as economically as possible, when people move to new jobs through recruitment, transfer or promotion.

Training is the process by which people are taught skills and given necessary knowledge or attitude to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to the required standard according to Cushway (2004). His research findings pointed that whereas training is concerned

with equipping staff to carry out their responsibilities to the required standard in their present job, development is concerned with giving individuals the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to take greater and more demanding roles and responsibilities.

3. THE TRAINING PROCESS COMPRISES OF THE FOLLOWING STAGES

Training Needs Analysis – This involves defining training needs and assessing to what extent barriers to the achievement of organizational objectives may be removed by training. The analysis is done at the three levels: organizational, group and individual level.

Planning Training Program – In planning, there are a number of factors that are taken in account including training objectives, training content, training methods and their appropriateness, training participants, likely costs involved, costs of not training, likely benefits and their evaluation.

Implementing Training Programme – Once the training has been thoroughly planned, the next stage is to implement it. The form of the training would depend on the people to be trained and the objectives of the training.

Evaluation of Training and Development – Evaluating the effectiveness of training to try and measure the results of training.

4. APPROACHES TO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

On The Job Training – Where the activity is undertaken within the workplace and which is done through demonstrations, coaching, do-it-yourself training, technology – based training, job rotation and planned experience.

Training is the process by which people are taught skills and given necessary knowledge or attitude to enable them to carry out their responsibilities to the required standard

Some organizations have no doubt, rued the fact that they failed to set aside adequate resources for the training functions. Their plans for expansion and development having been severely hampered by the unpreparedness of their human resources and their recruitment, selection and personnel policies have been insufficient to compensate for this shortfall.

Off The Job Training Techniques – Where the activity is undertaken within the workplace and that which involve lectures, case studies, role plays, discussion groups, development centers, group dynamics, action learning, projects, business games and outdoor training.

5. BENEFITS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Organizations are made up of people and its is through their endeavours, whether they are the Chief Executive or the most junior member of staff, that the organization achieves its objectives and is successful. Training and development can contribute to the success of the organization by enabling employees to improve their performance and thus,

- 1 Achieve promotion and follow a chosen career path
- 1 Acquire professional or further educational qualifications
- 1 Improve quality of work and reduce waste and errors.
- 1 Achieve job satisfaction

For the organization, training and development provides:

- 1 Improved performance.
- 1 Reduced costs.
- 1 Increased range of competencies of employees which enables the organization to have a flexible workforce.

Individuals can benefit in a number of ways. In relation to their current positions, trainees may gain grater intrinsic or extrinsic job satisfaction. Intrinsic job satisfaction may come from performing a task well and from being able to exercise a new repertoire of skills. Extrinsic job satisfaction may be derived from extra earnings accrued thorough improved job

- performance and the enhancement of
- career and promotion prospects both
- within and outside the organization to
- which they belong. Benefit to the
- organization include improved employee
- work performance and productivity;
- shorter learning time which could lead to
- less costly training and employees being
- ‘on line’ more quickly; decrease in
- wastage; fewer accidents and mishaps;
- less absenteeism; lower labour turnover
- and greater customer or client satisfaction.
- [Training in Organizations by Irwin L.
- Goldstein and J. Kevin Ford]

- In order to survive and to operate
- effectively, all travel organization must
- adapt and respond in a timely and flexible
- way to technical, economic and social
- changes. This requirement has become
- imperative as we approach the twenty-
- first century and it implies that there are
- particular individual, group, organizational
- and institutional attitudes and perspectives
- needed by the nation’s manpower.
- Training is one of the processes by which
- such needs can be realized.

- Buckley ad Caple [The Theory
- and Practice of Training, Roger Buckley
- & Lim Caple] point out that everyone in
- the organization, particularly senior
- managers and directors, needs to
- understand the processes and techniques
- of training and speak the language of
- training. Training cannot be got ‘on the
- cheap’, it requires a suitable and a
- consistent level of financial support. Those
- who balk at this notion must appreciate
- that, in many organizations, the outlay on
- training should be on a par with other
- major investment decisions. Some
- organizations have no doubt, rued the fact
- that they failed to set aside adequate
- resources for the training functions. Their
- plans for expansion and development
- having been severely hampered by the
- unpreparedness of their human resources

and their recruitment, selection and personnel policies have been insufficient to compensate for this shortfall. It follows that training cannot be seen as simply a peripheral function having only a marginal influence over an organization's present and future economic health. An organization's economic health is determined by, and can only be understood fully, in terms of its ability to adapt to changing internal and external circumstances. Thus, training should form part of the strategy to affect this adaptability.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several studies related to general training and development on international level but very few have been found related to tourism. Bambrough (1996) says that if the amount of training and development or learning increases, then we can infer, that more money and time will be spent in this area.

"Buckley and Caple (1990) have emphasized the role of training in an organization's success. According to them, training should play an important part in assisting an organization to achieve its corporate objectives. Unfortunately, the status of the training department and the level of its resourcing does not always reflect this belief."

According to its 2005 State of the Industry Report, the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) reports the U.S. organizations are investing more in employee learning, and technology continues to play a major role in delivering learning to the workforce. Thorne and Machray (2000) found out that many companies have given training and development a higher priority in recent years as they came to realize that this is a fundamental part of managing the change to make the organization more effective.

Training is regarded more as an investment that brings rewards than as an overhead that has little or no bearing on organizational performance according to them.

Travel Technology consultant Paul Richter says that the travel industry is relying more and more on technology to deliver its service cost effectively. Yet, technology will never replace the human face of the tourism sector, it can certainly help people work more effectively. By encouraging automation and re-engineering of work processes which can improve efficiency, more people can be enticed to join the industry, and thus reduce the shortage of manpower in the industry.

The goal of sustainability oriented tourism development requires a number of human resources development (HRD) strategies aimed at the tourism industry personnel, host community and the tourists, and underpinned by concepts and practices of sustainability. Sustainability based 'work culture', 'professional ethics' and operational practices are basics to sustainability in tourism. Indian tourism, despite its immense potential, has seen tardy development, and shortcomings in the HRD domain which have been one of the reasons for this below par performance. Jithendran and Braun (2000) suggest a comprehensive and strategic approach to HRD, catering to the training and education needs of Indian tourism at various levels for the major target groups. Their research paper also identifies the pressing issues confronting HRD in Indian tourism and potential strategies to address them within the context to sustainability.

In 2004, an international workshop 'Trends and skill needs in the tourism sector' was organized which

According to its 2005 State of the Industry Report, the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) reports that U.S. organizations are investing more in employee learning, and technology continues to play a major role in delivering learning to the workforce.

Substantial work has been done in the general area of training and development both at the international and Indian level, as suggested by the review of literature.

highlighted latest trends and skill needed in the hotel, catering and tourism sector in an international perspective. Speakers and participants from 13 countries (Europe, North American and Africa) took part in this event. Discussion about the role of qualifications in the tourism sector touched the problem of human resource waste caused by high appreciation from other sectors and employer's failure to attract qualified personnel to the sector. Taking into account the need for qualifications from other sectors, the participants agreed that transversal and hybrid qualifications might be useful and could lead to new occupational profiles. Furthermore, it is vitally important for the sector to be able to attract the labour force trained specifically for work in tourism. The problem was noted that some employers deliberately look for unqualified labor for the sake of paying less. The question, however, remains whether such a policy would lead to higher profits and longer-term competitiveness. Another important question remains: how can the skill gaps in the tourism sector be overcome under the condition of insecure and often seasonal employment and relatively low pay? It was noted that training and development played a crucial role in this respect.

According to Batra and Chawla (1995), 'at present, there are no formal training programmes for the personnel in the field of activities of tourism...' Substantial work has been done in the general area of training and development both at the international and Indian level, as suggested by the review of literature.

Hence the present paper highlights the basic issues and concerns of training and development in the tourism sector and proposes recommendations to further improve the current situation.

7. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The various players in the Travel & Tourism industry include: Airlines, Hotels, Car Rental, Tour Operators, Travel Wholesalers which come under the category of suppliers in the industry. The channels of the above service providers include GDS, Internet, Web T.V., Wireless etc. Further the most important players in the Tourism Industry, whose perspective all the improvements in the tourism sector are sought is the customers, which include travel agencies, Internet/online service providers, corporate travel departments etc.

8. THE INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Types of training are: Products Training - Cover the technical aspects of the job and are related to reservation systems, fares, ticketing, itinerary planning, health and travel insurance, visa and foreign exchange procedures. Behavioral Training - These are related to soft-skills training in managing business, managing people, managing customers, managing self and some of these are related to sales negotiation skills, leadership, customer service, stress management, time management.

Basis of selection of employees and recommendations for participation in training programmes include:

- Level in the organization
Job function
Random selection
Personal bias of the management

Training has always played an important and integral part in furthering

many kinds of human learning and development. Companies, organizations and government are beginning to appreciate the value of adequate, consistent and long-term investment in this function. However, this is yet to be practiced consciously by the this industry.

In the tourism sector, there is a universal, and sometimes overlapping, demand for knowledge and competencies. These include tourism related knowledge and competencies (e.g. tourism products, services, destinations, general geographical knowledge, computer knowledge, reservation systems, etc.) as well as business knowledge and competencies (e.g. customer orientation, selling techniques, marketing, calculation). Further knowledge and competencies can include languages, time management, product design and rhetoric. To meet the changing demand, businesses countries competing for tourists are forced to spend considerable efforts on training and retraining their staff, in the tourism sector.

A few emerging areas in tourism are – special interest tourism (eco-tourism, rural tourism, natural and cultural heritage tourism, adventure tourism), recreational tourism (lakes, mountains, spas) and business tourism. Training for these different types is extremely important and should aim to attract skilled labour to the sector, to retain and develop skilled labour in the sector and support enterprises at regional and local level to improve their competitiveness. These goals can be realized by creating a permanent observatory on learning, employment and labour environment in the tourism sector.

Dr. Pareek (2005) talks about Hostility to training. He says that in some cases, the work organization managers in general, and top management in particular,

consider training as a waste of time and may have a hostile attitude towards it. In such cases, the effectiveness of training will be doubtful. Hostility to training may be based on the experience that training is not producing the desired results.

The book by Dr. Swain (2006) emphasizes the “Why’s and how’s of linking HRD to a tourism organizations’ strategic business objectives”; HRD’s role to contribute to organizational success and employee well-being; the commonalities and differences of interests existing between employers and employees in tourism enterprises; and the need for tourism organizations to become internationally competitive in the context of globalization.

9. CHALLENGES AHEAD

Worldwide, employment within the tourism economy is estimated at 192.2 million jobs and by 2010 this should grow to 251-6 million jobs, according to a WTTC estimate. However, tourism education and training to achieve high levels of competence is rarely genuinely considered by the tourism industry. Although tourism is a growth industry and a major creator of value added, the industry is vulnerable to a variety of economic, ecological, geopolitical and meteorological factors, which shape the nature of its labour force. The inescapable fact that it is difficult to maintain high permanent staffing levels has led to a generic tendency to operate on the basis of a limited core staff and to employ the labour needed for day-to-day operations under typical contractual arrangements, because of which the economic rents from continuous learning and experience of the staff are lost to a great extent. Added to this are other constraints of the hotel, catering, and tourism industry like long, antisocial working hours, low pay, low job status, etc. Which collectively make

Training for these different types is extremely important and should aim to attract skilled labour to the sector, to retain and develop skilled labour in the sector and support enterprises at regional and local level to improve their competitiveness.

Over the last two decades, the tourism companies have transformed their pattern and structure to meet tough challenges in the international tourism market.

employment within the industry appear unattractive to many. Tourism industry need, professionals specializing in different operational and managerial functions – tour planning and itinerary designing, travel information, reservation and ticketing services, destination counseling, sales and marketing, finance and accounts, conferences and conventions, visa and travel insurance, foreign exchange services etc. Therefore, a company's recruitment policy may not be only to focus on functional expertise but on attitudes and approaches that fit their corporate goals and culture.

To view of the above discussion, the challenges present before the Tourism Industry include:

- 1. Examining the role and existing policies of training and development in travel agencies.
- 1. Studying the problems faced by top management in imparting training programmes.
- 1. Evaluating the role of cost as a

- deterrent to training.
- 1. Accessing the perception of the top management towards training and development.
- 1. Identifying the training related problems faced by employees working in tourism industry.
- 1. Reviewing the expectations of the employees for training and development and its scope in future.
- 1. developing a training manual for the tourism industry.

10. CONCLUSION

Today, the tourism industry is becoming more and more competitive. Over the last two decades, the tourism companies have transformed their pattern and structure to meet tough challenges in the international tourism market. Hence in this volatile business environment, tourism industry will succeed only when it changes to meet the competitive threats and opportunities to match the needs of a new tourism market, and bring flexibility, creativity, innovation, determination and professionalism into its operations.

REFERENCES

1. Roger Buckley & Jim (1990), *The theory and Practice of Training*, Kogan Page London.
2. Barry Cushway (2004) *Human Resource Management*, Kogan Page India.
3. Manpower Services Commission (1981) *Glossary of Training Terms*, 3rd edition, HMSO, London.
4. *International workshop on Trends and skill needs in the tourism sector* (www.trainingvillage.gr)
5. Dr. Udai Pareek (2005) 'Managers as Training Partners', article published in the Indian Journal of Training and Development, Jul – Sep 05.
6. Samad Kumar Swain (2006), *Human Resource Development in Tourism: Principles and Practices*, Abhijeet Publications New Delhi.
7. Mohinder Chand and Vinay Chauhan, 'Travel Agency HRD Practices: An Investigation', Tourism in India (under Deptt. of Tourism, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra).
8. G.S. Batra and A.S. Chawla (1995), *Tourism Management: A Global Perspective*, Deep an Deep Publications India.
9. *Indian Journal of Training an Development*, Volume XXXV No. 2 & No. 3.
10. Robert L. Craig (1996), *The ASTD training and development handbook: A guide to human resource development*, 4th edn., MCGraw-Hill New York.
11. Fred P. Bosselman, Claire McCarthy, (1999) Craig A Peterson, *Managing Tourism Growth: Issues and Application*, Island Press.
12. *Navigator 2003: The Indian Tourism Strategist*.