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**ABSTRACT**

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Evaluation of the course content of selected graduate courses for on-line delivery in			
(Title)			
hospitality and tourism management by industry professionals.			
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**PROPOSED STUDY**

In looking ahead into the new millennium, technology based training appears to be an integral and vital solution to the challenges of hospitality training. As modern technology is utilized in training, teaching and the delivery of distance learning courses, a close evaluation is needed to assess and analyze the content of the on-line courses, to see that they meet industry requirements.

Course evaluations should be used to ensure that the course content is meeting the needs of the students who complete the course and can use their knowledge at a professional level, and is also approved by the industry. It is also essential to ensure that the courses provide quality learning and is relevant to enhance the required skills of the end user.

The study will provide an overview on the importance of distance learning and the need for on-line delivery through the Internet. The various facets of the on-line program will be discussed. A review of literature detailing the impacts of on-line education in the future and its influence on education and training will be provided.

The sample for the study consists of two groups. A random list of hospitality industry professional who will be willing to evaluate the courses and who would be contacted prior to sending out the survey instrument. The second group will be the supervisors of the students who are currently enrolled in the on-line program promoted by the department.

The sample population will be given the course outline along with the course objectives and they will be required to evaluate them on a likert scale (survey instrument enclosed). This study is expected to evaluate and analyze two courses that are to be delivered on-line by the Department of Hospitality and Tourism–UW-Stout. The evaluation will be done by senior professionals from the hospitality industry.

The findings of the study will be used by the Department of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. These findings will assist the department in reevaluating the course content and delivering a better product for the student and tailoring it to meet the professional needs of the industry.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This thesis is a part of my graduate education, which I dedicate to the Department of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I hope the study will assist the university in its future endeavors in online education.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction to the Study**

Education has traditionally been based out of a classroom with instructors teaching students face to face. With the amazing speed of improvements and advancements in technology, education is taking a turn towards asynchronous teaching and learning. The Internet and the World Wide Web have burst onto the scene as a means of delivering instruction and in doing so have prompted the creation of the concept of asynchronous teaching and learning (Lian, 1997).

The advent of distance education has made it possible for a growing body of nontraditional students to gain a quality education while maintaining employment and fulfilling personal responsibilities (Iverson, 1996). The Internet has brought life to asynchronous learning, which is interactive learning without the interaction between student and teacher occurring at the same time. In the process of participating between one another, asynchronous learning more than compensates for the lack of interpersonal contact.

A primary benefit of asynchronous learning is that it allows flexibility in terms of space and time (Meyen, 1997). Students decide when and where they will access the instruction. While a teacher is working with a group of students or a professor is lecturing in a course through traditional instruction, other students can progress on lessons via the Internet, leaving messages when necessary for the instructors, who will respond to them at their convenience. Asynchronous teaching via the Internet has the advantage of offering many more objective ways of measuring the array of variables that are typically aligned with the evaluation of teaching (Meyen, 1997).

Through the World Wide Web, instructors and students now have access to worldwide resources that they could not access in any other way, thus opening doors to other cultures as well as resources that students were formerly only able to read or hear about. Through the Internet it is further possible for students to be educated from almost anywhere to almost anywhere.

One of the most significant ways in which the Internet and the World Wide Web will redefine the classroom is that there will be no boundaries. Teachers and students can communicate with peers around the world and carry out collaborative projects via the Internet. Teachers will also be able to access information on curricular topics that will help bring added meaning to their teaching.

The Internet as an instructional tool has a far-reaching impact on the educational process. It not only assists as a means of instruction, but also helps in communication and bridges the gap between the teacher and student. Instructors can send messages to individuals or groups at any time. Students can further retrieve these messages at any time depending on the time zone they are located in or at their convenience. Adapting material for distance learning classes takes a great deal of preparation to ensure that both the on-campus students and the online students are receiving the best possible instruction. It takes organization, patience, and preparation with the underlying awareness and concern of addressing two audiences (Hubbard, 1997).

Resources such as syllabi, assignments, readings, quizzes, and announcements can be made via electronic communication. These resources are available to students with no effort other than to be placed on the Internet.

Online education and instruction offer new opportunities for persons with disabilities. The multimedia, self-pacing, and personal features of online instruction not only make instruction more accessible, but also allows for the tailoring of instruction to meet the needs of individuals requiring special consideration. Online students can complete their studies in environments of their choice.

The rapid development of Information Technology with other major forces for change are shaping the academic future (Beckett, 1996). Beckett also states that the student profile is changing to more mature students who will be more comfortable with the distance learning approach. The course structure of the future will be modular, self-paced, open access and flexible with the facility to study across continents.

Globalization, which was unheard of, a decade ago is gaining momentum with the assistance of technology. Globalization is highly visible in the field of education as it makes learning accessible and available around the world through the unbridled growth of the Internet. People who have access to the World Wide Web have access to higher education provided by other countries around the globe. Universities need to adapt rapidly to the demands being placed upon them as a result of globalization to retain their positions as the major providers of higher learning opportunities (Jarvis, 1999).

Internet education is a powerful tool to aid educators in their quest to reach and educate students on a global level. This study will focus on the trends of utilizing the World Wide Web as an efficient tool to promote courses in the hospitality industry. It will relate technology to distance education, evaluate the content being taught to students on a global perspective, and address some concerns and obstacles faced by the globalization of education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Evaluating course content is a critical factor in determining the validity of a course. The problem of this study is to assess and analyze whether the content in two selected graduate level on-line courses offered by the department of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout through a global partnership, are meeting the requirements and expectations of the hospitality industry.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the importance of on-line education.
2. To evaluate the validity of the content being taught in two selected courses.
3. To analyze and assess how the courses address the needs of the hospitality and tourism industry.
4. To identify key factors that would enhance and improve the content in the courses.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and validate the content of two selected courses. This evaluation will assist the faculty in the department of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in providing quality education. This study will attempt to gain a deeper understanding of distance learning.

The study will assist teachers to identify curriculum topics that are necessary to meet the Hospitality and Tourism industry needs. Educators will also be able to identify the requirements of the course at a global level as the issues and strategies for management are the same around the world. Finally, this study will assist hospitality educators deliver better courses for the student and meet the professional needs of the industry.

## **Justification for the Study**

In looking ahead into the future, on-line education is taking center stage in academia. With the growing importance of technology and it evolving by the day at a rapid pace, it is imperative that on-line education follows on its heels.

With educational institutions scrambling to reach out to a larger audience and providing them with a solid education, it is necessary to provide courses whose content meet academic criteria and industry needs. Through this study it will be possible for academicians to focus on and provide the appropriate materials needed in each course to increase and stimulate student knowledge and thinking. Distance learning allows educational institutions to develop and provide outreach to industry. While distance learning is not new, this research will increase the overall understanding of technologically based distance learning and aid in improving the delivery systems to hospitality professionals.

By analyzing the course content, this study offers insights into the importance of what is being taught and what is required to be further incorporated into the courses, thus providing the students with a concrete base before venturing into the professional world. As on-line education is utilized to enhance and improve existing programs, it is essential that effective learning strategies be evaluated. The study will further establish that these courses will meet the requirements of students at a global level in the field of hospitality and tourism.

## **Limitations**

The primary limitations of this study are:

1. The hospitality and tourism professionals used in the survey were located in the

United States of America.

2. The respondents may be influenced by their academic background and formal knowledge in the hospitality and tourism industry.
2. The respondent's evaluation is based only on the objectives and the teaching materials available in the course.
4. The findings of the study are limited by the validity and reliability of the survey instrument and the CD-ROM developed and used to gather the data.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions were made pertaining to this study:

1. The respondents to the questionnaire were qualified to assess, evaluate and recommend changes to the validity and content of the on-line courses.
2. The questionnaire was answered properly, accurately, and without major personal bias.

### **Definitions of Terms**

Evaluation. Evaluation is defined as a process of examining certain objects and events in the light of specified value standards for the purpose of making adaptive decisions (Roid, G.H. 1972).

Asynchronous Learning. Asynchronous learning is interactive instruction without the interaction between student and teacher occurring at the same time. The advantage of asynchronous delivery includes student choice of location and time. Students may choose their own instructional time frame and gather learning materials according to their schedule (Steiner, 1995).

Distance Education. Distance education is instructional delivery that does not constrain the student to be physically present in the same location as the instructor. The use of educational media to unite teacher and learner and carry course content (Steiner, 1995).

Globalization. Globalization is the process in which distance becomes less a factor in the establishment and sustenance of border crossing, long distance economic, political and socio-cultural relations. It is an abstract concept that refers to Americanization, the growing importance of the world market, and is used to describe a cultural or ideological reality. Globalization involves political, economic and socio-cultural changes and is seen as a dialectal dynamic (Lubbers, 1998).

Course Content. Course content consists of these components: a description of the course design (credits, hours, fees), activities, prerequisite knowledge and skills, evaluation and a course outline (Shrawder, 1987).

Collaborative Learning Environment. Collaborative learning environment is where both teachers and learners are active participants in the learning process; knowledge is not something that is "delivered" to students in this process, but something that emerges from active dialogue among those who seek to understand and apply concepts and techniques (Hiltz, 1990).

Content Validity. A thorough, intensive review and evaluation by field experts to determine content and relatedness of a study. The use of field experts is important since content validity relies heavily upon expert judgment (Spool, 1975).

## **Summary**

The world is getting to be smaller and more accessible by the day through the impacts of technology. This is more so evident in the field of education, which has taken

huge strides in reaching out to the world population by globalizing education through the Internet and the World Wide Web. Asynchronous learning and teaching has made distance learning popular with students who do not have the ability or access to classroom instruction.

This chapter discussed the need for the study and the significance of evaluating course content to meet industry and global requirements. The research objectives are stated and relative terms are defined for future reference. The assumptions and limitations of the study are explained. Chapter II contains a review of literature on this topic. The methodology used for this study is described in Chapter III, and the results are summarized in Chapter IV. Finally, Chapter V provides a summary, conclusion, and recommendations for this study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of Literature**

This chapter is an examination of relevant literature concerning the theoretical background and current inquiry into distance learning, asynchronous delivery and computer technology as it relates to this research project. The chapter is divided into six sections. The first is the importance of technology on distance learning, followed by the importance of online education and distance learning, its growth through globalization, the advantages of asynchronous learning, the impact of online education on the industry and workforce, and finally the importance and need to evaluate the course content of online courses.

The enormous growth of the Internet has opened new means of delivering university courses without geographic boundaries (Kroder, 1998). Kroder further reiterates that those academics who leap into this new arena are faced with numerous challenges that must be overcome and institutions must be assured that students who earn credits on the Internet have accomplished the learning objectives that are appropriate for those courses.

It has been argued elsewhere (Jarvis, 1999) that what universities teach is not knowledge, but information, which only becomes knowledge when it has been learned, and only becomes legitimate knowledge when it has been found to work for the learners. This is an information age, so this claim is not particularly startling. In this society, lifelong learning has become something that affects all and the learning society is a consumer society and learners are consumers of information and universities and other colleges in the educational system are among the providers in the market (Jarvis, 1999).

Online education or distance learning has taken center stage in the education field. The new electronic technologies such as CD-ROM interactive disks, computer bulletin boards, and multimedia hyper-text available over the global Internet using the World Wide Web, can provide students with far greater involvement in the process of learning (Steiner, 1995).

The revolution in telecommunications technology has fostered the rapid growth of the Internet all over the world thus enabling the teaching and learning process to cross boundaries that were earlier impossible to overcome. The Internet is a massive global network comprising many national and international networks of interconnected computers (Rao and Natesan 1996; Hoffman and Novak 1996). The Internet and the World Wide Web has made it possible for institutions and educators to promote knowledge and learning worldwide. The new technology can provide access to students in the most remote areas of the world, the benefits of higher education.

The following review will give us a background on:

1. The impact of technology on distance learning.
2. The importance of online education and distance learning.
3. Online learning -Growth through globalization.
4. The advantages of asynchronous learning.
5. The impact of online education on the industry and workforce.
6. The importance and need for evaluating the course content.

### **The Impact of Technology on Distance Learning**

The impact of technology on learning is an ever-evolving process. The emerging power and applicability of technology has revolutionized education by becoming more

virtual rather than physical. Technology has forced educators to think on a global level and provide education and training on an international scale. Innovations in technology has made education through distance learning a reality as more and more institutions are providing courses online and giving learners the access to higher education and training.

The ways in which educational institutions use technology to manage knowledge is the single most important discriminator between success and failure of distance learning. The use of various tools like interactive multimedia, teleconferencing, television, electronic publishing, and video enhance the quality and efficiency of learning and provide a virtual environment for distance learners (Marquardt, 1999). He also explains that the types of technology used for distance learning are diverse and institutions are investing in a wide variety of electronic learning devices for their presentations and for the distribution of the course. With the availability of cable and satellite TV, CD-ROM, Electronic mail, Extranet, Internet, Intranet, the World Wide Web, Local and Wide Area Networks, it is possible to distribute the courses all over the globe.

Technology and distance learning go hand in hand because of its quality, relevance and speed. Technology assists distance learning in more ways than can be imagined. It helps to access the learning environment as needed and just-in-time, and gives the learner control over his time and place. Technology makes distance learning self paced and user friendly with the typical use of an interface that is conducive to point-and-click navigation. Technology has made distance learning cost-effective to not only the learner but also the educational institute.

One of the greatest benefits of technology is its ability to provide distance learning where the instructor and/or training source is some distance from the learner. Learning

via technology allows accessibility to any number of geographic areas (Marquardt, 1999). Technology such as touchpads, Internet, and Intranets allow for hands-on, direct, and immediate interaction with instructors and fellow learners. Through technology, GroupWare, chatrooms, and other two-way communication tools are easily integrated into the distance learning program.

Thus, the beauty of marrying technology with distance learning has resulted in greatly improved and enhanced knowledge based education.

### **Importance of Online Education and Distance Learning**

Online education introduces unprecedented options for teaching, learning, and knowledge building. New communication technologies introduce powerful environments to enhance social and intellectual connectivity's (Harasim, 1990). Online education based on the use of computer communication systems for educational delivery and interaction is growing rapidly as a field of practice. Collaborative learning theory, which highlights social and intellectual interaction offers a valuable starting point in distance learning (Harasim, 1990).

The online environment is an effective medium for collaborative learning. It provides a fertile forum for interaction. The interaction necessarily involves relationships between students and teachers and advances the knowledge of the participants. Flows of information into groups, out of groups, and within groups become important attributes of collaborative learning (Rice, 1982). Collaborating through computer conferencing offers a kind of 'panoptic power' (Zuboff, 1988): it becomes possible to access and collaborate with experts and peers anywhere, regardless of location. These features expand access to learning and intellectual resources that were unavailable earlier.

Although distance learners have more control over when and where studying takes place, they need more support in terms of resources they can access in order to carry out the learning process. Online teaching can provide vastly enhanced opportunities for dialogues, debates, and conversational learning. It provides a real sense of community and affiliation through its networking potential (Boyd, 1989), which in turn gives access to other students experiences and opinions.

The extent to which students can initiate the communication process has an important influence on their sense of control over their learning environment (Garrison and Baynton, 1987). The primary advantages of using distance learning are time and cost effectiveness due to budget constraints, a changing workforce, less downtime, and a need to train more people more often with no time away from the worksite (Jaffa, 1997).

On a social perspective, the increased pervasiveness and connectivity of technology in the home has increased parent involvement and student interest in out-of-school learning. Easy access to technology and rich education content can make learning easier, more convenient, more interesting, and more productive (Kozma, 1998).

The Pennsylvania State University proffered the following view within a report from its Task Force on Distance Education (1998), where it illustrates the services of an online education environment for distance learning:

1. Delivery of education to multiple sites.
2. Using content experts, industry lecturers, and "hot topics" to augment courses and lectures.
3. Downloading information from multiple sources and in multiple data format presentations.

4. Teaching low enrollment courses at multiple campuses.
5. Evaluating instruction remotely.
6. Conducting research via online access to libraries and the new virtual libraries including access to our nation's prestigious universities, national museums, and corporate libraries.
7. Supporting student requests with multiple electronic messaging tools with timely responses from faculty and support personnel.
8. Enrichment of adult education.
9. Extension of campus to geographically challenged students.

As the workplace is getting more competitive and people do not find the time to attend regular traditional classes at educational institutions, distance learning is taking center stage in the educational arena. With advantages outnumbering disadvantages in learning through distance education, a large section of the workforce and adult learners who want to advance through higher education are moving towards this media of instruction.

### **Online Learning-Growth through Globalization**

The advent of globalization has advanced education and expanded the educational institutions to implement a formal virtual environment. Globalization and the ability to provide educational services over great distances has pushed forward due to advancements in voice, video, and data systems (Bradley, Hausman, and Nolan, 1993).

Through globalization educational institutions are able to capitalize on market niches that are too small, too remote, or too expensive to serve by delivering courses in the traditional manner (Walker, 1998). However, educational institutes can fully service

these markets with advanced technology. An institute can now deliver a full range of educational services ‘virtually’ to students at any location on the globe who have access to the supporting technology (Walker, 1998).

Educational institutions are providing a global, capability-based environment that integrates sound instructional and research methodologies and full administrative processes augmented with powerful, advanced systems and network technologies. These trends are now providing education any time, any place, anywhere from accredited institutions and organizations for degrees, courses, and knowledge-based learning (Walker, 1998).

Distance education is already becoming mainstream overseas, with courses and degrees available over the Internet from institutions dotting the globe (Cummings, 1997). Corporate universities have been established by companies and firms to educate and train their staff on a global level. The emphasis on distance learning by corporations who have their companies in far-flung countries is to provide uniformity in performance and help educate everyone to meet a single standard. This process is economically viable and highly cost effective, rather than having students and teachers go from one location to another.

The University of Phoenix, a for-profit organization owned by Apollo Communications Inc., produces high-quality courseware accessed through more than 50 study centers established in major US cities. Both profitable and popular, it opened its first centers in Europe in the fall of 1999 (Newby, 1999). Newby refers to public universities in the Midwest and Northern Rockies region having joined together to form the Western Governors University of the United States, which offers learning degrees

across the US as well as to overseas students. He also refers to American research-led universities and "knowledge providers" in the private sector, such as Time Warner, Disney Corporation, Microsoft and Cisco having discussed partnerships to develop courseware and support to attack the global market in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This is possible as the universities provide the "branding" necessary for market credibility and the partners provide the production facilities, distribution and marketing, as well as much of the underlying technology that will allow the operation to proceed on a truly global basis.

New technological, scientific, and organizational know-how is driving economic globalization. The globalization of the economy, increased competitiveness, and continuing technological change has created a need for new skills in industry. Education, on a global perspective assists workers in acquiring these skills. In order to teach and educate through globalization, nations need to establish the need and have the basic infrastructure, of which a few requirements are to:

1. Establish national goals and objectives for higher education.
2. Be committed to a lifelong learning strategy.
3. Have the technical know-how for international competition.
4. Establish national curriculum and standards.
5. Develop closer links between education and the economy.
6. Promote social equity/ cohesion.
7. Encourage greater system of efficiency through the use of information technologies.
8. Build a stronger learning culture at home, school, and at work (Faris, 1995).

Globalization provides distance learning courses via partnerships. Universities in the United States can partner with universities in other parts of the world to teach courses to distance learners. This provides an international perspective on topics and also helps students cross cultural barriers and understand other students' thoughts and ideas. The University of Wisconsin-Stout is partnering with universities in Australia, The United Kingdom, and Germany to promote and teach certain hospitality courses. This gives the university high visibility worldwide and also helps students access subjects, courses, and topics of interest that is not provided by the parent university. Students have access to international lecturers and also have the privilege of communicating with them at any time.

Globalization has been an asset to the growth of online education and the global trends in distance education are many and complex. Universities throughout the world must adapt to the global trends or they will be by-passed in the fast paced technical world. It is imperative to note that online education would not have taken the strides that it has and will in the future if it globalization had not played a significant role.

### **Advantages of Asynchronous Learning**

Over the years a small number of motivated individuals have studied by themselves, away from university centers, to acquire knowledge. Off-campus learners have worked mainly in isolation with only occasional contact with instructors and peers. With today's low cost communications and computer technologies, learning through the asynchronous learning method assists students to overcome barriers of isolation, distance and rigid time constraints.

Most computer based learning is based upon asynchronous (that is, not real time) communication. Users participate at a time and at a pace convenient to them and appropriate to the application. This attribute impacts upon group dynamics and the learning process. The "24 hour classroom" is always open; this facilitates self-pacing and self-directed learning. Asynchronicity expands user control over the time of the interaction, and increases the time available to read or reread a message and formulate a comment (Harasim, 1990).

Asynchronous and place-independent participation enable each person to access the learning situation at a time that is most opportune for that task, thereby facilitating increased activity. Asynchronous group learning can also reduce competition for airtime among participants. Because the system can accept and display input from all participants, there is no concern that time restrictions or turn taking will limit expression or opportunities to speak (Harasim, 1990). Each user can access the system at the time/day of his/her choice, and as frequently and for as long as required.

Asynchronous interactivity is one of the most important approaches to distance education. It has become the basis for a new and large-scale learning model among distance learners. Such interactivity is already the basis for project work in business enterprises, where geographically dispersed teams can develop project goals, share analyses, carry on discussions and debate, and prepare presentations or reports without ever meeting in the same room or even connecting at the same time through a conference call (Mayadas, 1997).

In asynchronous learning every person on the network is both a user and a resource of knowledge. This concept is crucial to the power of asynchronous learning, as it is a

network of people and an interactive learning community. Individual knowledge and access to resources is made possible by computers and communications technologies like, GroupWare, videotape, CD-ROM or the World Wide Web. Peer-to-peer collaborative learning among students is greatly enhanced through asynchronous access to each other or to tutors. Improved communication among the network of students and teachers may have a favorable impact on student motivation, retention, and their learning productivity may increase (Mayadas, 1997).

Access to high quality, cohort-style learning is made possible through asynchronicity, efficiency and geographically distributed cohorts, where self pacing is an attractive option for those who wish to accelerate their progress or for others who are intellectually capable but lack the background to keep up with a regular class. Asynchronous learning gives these individuals the liberty and freedom to mold the course to their personal needs and priorities.

As asynchronous learning becomes the norm throughout academia, academic libraries, as the entity responsible for serving the information needs of the learner, is changing dramatically (Eustis, 1998). They are a major advantage to the asynchronous learner as they bring academia to the students' doorstep through technology. In response to user needs and demand, libraries have collaborated with other in the academy and with commercial publishers to provide access to materials that support all learners, especially those using networks for asynchronous learning.

Technology-mediated asynchronous learning and network-based information delivery hold great promise for future learners.

## **The Impact of Online Education on the Industry and Workforce.**

As the global economy expands and becomes more knowledge-based, the demand for knowledge workers increases. The supply of knowledge workers is beginning to limit economic growth in some regions around the world. For hotel corporations, acquiring and supporting knowledge workers is becoming the most critical factor for retention and success (Lytle, 1999). For the individual knowledge worker, the result is both enhanced career opportunity and increased pressure to learn more while working at an even-faster pace.

Time and time again, hoteliers site the shortage of trained, experienced employees as their primary concern. The development of the online hotel management programs or any other program that would enhance employee skills is important for the hospitality industry employees striving to improve their skills from afar. Educating employees results in a more educated staff and helps employees attain otherwise unobtainable goals. It is estimated that the U.S. businesses will spend an estimated \$10 billion by 2002 for online content and skills for employees (Williams, 1999).

Many corporations are requiring managers to hop online and provide education, as well as get education for themselves on myriad administrative issues. Online learning is transforming the lives of business and education professionals, working adults and students alike. In the corporate world, individuals involved in organizational management and support, information systems and human resources are benefiting from the online, web-based teaching phenomenon by implementing skill strategies delivered via Internet media (Williams, 1999).

More and more hospitality industry professionals are being educated by their companies to help them progress with the organization. The human resource departments are moving towards the concept of web-based education as it is economically cheaper, restricts travel and keeps employees on the job, and also lessens the burden of heavy course material. They have realized that the demands on the workforce make it difficult for people to attend classes and that people simply do not have the time to fly to a location and spend time in a classroom.

World-class leaders such as Motorola, Ford Motor and MCI-WorldCom have already figured out that distance learning offers tremendous advantages where students can download material as needed and work at a self-paced schedule (Greengard, 1999). Greengard also notes that educating ones workforce through distance learning has helped companies slash their training budgets by 30-50 percent while creating a more effective learning environment.

Educating employees for corporations and managing a distance learning program requires a different mindset. Employees need to be highly motivated individuals who can learn on their own with minimal interference from others, and have a need to grow and develop. Although instructors are there to provide leadership, guidance and direction, students are autonomous. Instructors need to lay greater emphasis on coaching and facilitating, which also means that they must adapt material to fit the online environment (Greengard, 1999).

Companies like Johnson & Johnson use distance learning methods to enhance company quality and also help employees use the tuition reimbursement program (Saltzman, 1997). These programs assist in providing higher education by bringing

formal university courses on-site to their employees, thus offering a variety of sources for employees to choose from. In making employees aware of distance learning opportunities one can increase the commitment of learning in the organization and improve intellectual capital. Corporations have noted that educating their employees adds value to the company and builds on the employees' own areas of expertise and broadens the understanding of other areas.

Distance learning allows the industry to be more flexible and responsive to the constantly changing learning needs of their employees and is a winning strategy for corporations by providing them with a business edge (Saltzman, 1997). He also notes that distance learning makes business sense and is an available solution to address real-world business issues. It is imperative that the industry and the workforce work together in providing a distance learning environment that is both profitable and progressive. This can be achieved if:

1. The employer is willing to arm the employee with the right knowledge for tomorrow.
2. The employees and employers need to understand that a broader set of problem-solving skills will be necessary to compete in the global marketplace.
3. The islands of knowledge existing in universities, academic providers, and the industry are integrated to meet learning objectives.
4. The delivery process of online education is well suited to workplace learning needs.
5. The employee is highly motivated to grow and progress within the industry.

Industry needs to encourage distance education for their workforce and the knowledge worker must manage his/her own knowledge base throughout their career.

And corporate leadership must formulate, fund and execute policies that contribute to knowledge workforce learning that advances corporate strategy (Lytle, 1999).

### **Need for Evaluating Course Content**

Evaluation serves three main objectives – description, explanation, and validation (Hawkes, 1996). Description involves perceiving important aspects of a situation and presenting that perception vividly. Explanation generally uses description to point out relationships among program components. By understanding the components one can change projected outcomes. Validation involves testing the explanation to be sure it works. Validation can play an important evaluative role to determine if the resources put into a distance learning course are producing the desired outcomes.

Institutions that offer distance education programs to adult learners in any form; from correspondence to Web-based courses, have been honor bound to establish that such courses provide student learning and content, equivalent to that found with campus-based instruction. Distance education programs that are in their initial or pilot stages must demonstrate equivalency of learning outcomes in order to gain credibility in the industry of choice. Assessments and evaluations conducted have attempted to shed light on the academic rigor of distance education courses by considering factors such as the nature of the mediating technology, different instructional approaches and the course content (Dominguez et al, 1999).

Institutions that are in the initial stages of promoting a course online must have the course content assessed and evaluated before it is taught so that it meets the requirements of the global market. Evaluation analysis is done by students, faculty, and by the industry that the course relates to. This gives the institution an overall view of the course, its

contents and objectives from different perspectives. Evaluations assist universities in conforming and molding the course to meet employee needs and the global market at all levels.

While recognizing the importance of evaluation to improve programs, school leaders continue to rely largely on external assistance for format and content evaluation of distance education courses because of the expertise they see as necessary for the process (Lohman, 1998). Lohman argues that companies who believe in employee growth and retention take evaluation of distance learning courses seriously as they feel that it is a reason for doing business and making a case of it. They must evaluate the course for its reliable up-to-date data that can be transferred to the workplace, yet at the same time protecting its integrity and delivery.

It is imperative that course content is evaluated at the industry level as it assists students in learning and understanding the needs of the industry and the knowledge needed by companies of its employees. Online courses that are constructed around the industry requirements at a global level have a better chance of being accepted at the educational level as it is primarily the older working students who prefer distance learning and are already entrenched in the workforce. These courses help them understand as to what management expects in its employees if they expect to progress within the field of study.

Industry evaluations of courses look at the practical aspect of the course and its impact on the day-to-day functioning and implementation in the industry, whereas the academic aspect of the evaluation looks at what the student needs to know as a knowledge base. It is extremely important to blend the two views in a course curriculum

thus giving the learner a broader view, and thereby widening his/her horizon, potential and knowledge. Course evaluations need to be focused on the benefit to the students' growth and potential in the global arena.

Evaluation serves several important purposes in the development of distance education including (but not limited to) goal refinement, documentation, determination of impact, and program improvement. Evaluation must be an ongoing, continuous process. A good distance education program should be evaluated continuously throughout its life cycle, irrespective of it achieving its goals so as to be abreast of the global market.

### **Summary**

This chapter provides a review of literature that uncovers the importance of online education in the academic arena of the future and how it meets the demands of the global market. The online environment is an effective medium for collaborative learning. Online teaching can provide vastly enhanced opportunities for dialogues, debates, and conversational learning. The primary advantages of using distance learning are time and cost effectiveness. Easy access to technology and rich education content can make learning easier, more convenient, more interesting, and more productive.

The advent of globalization has advanced education and expanded the educational institutions to implement a formal virtual environment. Through globalization educational institutions are able to capitalize on market niches that are too small, too remote, or too expensive to serve. The emphasis on distance learning by corporations is to provide uniformity in performance and help educate everyone to meet a single standard on a global level. This process is economically viable and highly cost effective. Globalization provides distance learning courses via partnerships. This provides an

international perspective on topics and also helps students cross cultural barriers and understand other students' thoughts and ideas.

Most computer based learning is based upon asynchronous (that is, not real time) communication. Users participate at a time and at a pace convenient to them and appropriate to the application. Asynchronous interactivity is one of the most important approaches to distance education. It has become the basis for a new and large-scale learning model among distance learners.

As the global economy expands and becomes more knowledge-based, the demand for knowledge workers increases. For the individual knowledge worker, the result is both enhanced career opportunity and increased pressure to learn more. Many corporations are requiring managers to hop online and get education for themselves on myriad administrative issues. More and more hospitality industry professionals are being educated by their companies to help them progress with the organization. In making employees aware of distance learning opportunities one can increase the commitment of learning in the organization and improve intellectual capital.

Institutions that are in the initial stages of promoting a course online must have the course content assessed and evaluated before it is taught so that it meets the requirements of the global market. While recognizing the importance of evaluation to improve programs, school leaders continue to rely largely on external assistance for format and content evaluation of distance education courses because of the expertise they see as necessary for the process. Online courses that are constructed around the industry requirements at a global level have a better chance of being accepted at the educational level as it is primarily the older working students who prefer distance learning and are

already entrenched in the workforce. Evaluation must be an on-going and continuous process.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

This study sought to evaluate the course content of two selected graduate level online courses, namely, The Issues in Hospitality and Tourism and Strategic Management in Hospitality, offered by the department of hospitality and tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. It also sought to assess and analyze the outcome of the evaluation from an industry perspective. This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study, which include (a) research design, (b) population and sample, (c) instrument development, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

### **Research Design**

This study was conducted during a five-month period from May to September of 1999. The research methodology consisted of two segments. First, an analysis of related literature and an evaluation of related literature were conducted. This included an extensive study on the aspect of distance education and learning. It looked at the importance of online education in the global market. The study further laid emphasis on the asynchronous nature of distance learning and how the course content needs to meet the needs of the industry at a global level.

The review of literature also looked at distance learning and its course content through the eyes of the teacher, student and the hospitality industry professional. The literature review was used to examine the role of online education from a global perspective and the need for post secondary educational institutions to keep abreast with the changes in communication and technology if they are to survive in the competitive arena of distance education.

Next, a questionnaire was developed by the researcher and reviewed by the research advisor and faculty staff in the department of hospitality and tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Following the review, revisions were made to both the content and the format of the instrument. A CD-ROM was also produced containing the two courses as they are presented to students to accompany the questionnaire.

### **Population and Sample**

Time constraints and participants' availability played a key role in choosing the sample for the study. A decision was made to contact all the faculty members in the department of hospitality and tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout through electronic mail. The researcher requested the faculty to provide names of two or more professionals in the hospitality industry at the senior management level or who had the power to hire Stout graduates once they completed the distance learning courses. Once the researcher identified the tentative list of participants, they were contacted by telephone to verify their willingness to participate in the study.

The researcher went through a process of eliminating prospective participants who were either unavailable to participate in the study, did not have the required knowledge to evaluate the courses or who did not have the appropriate experience in the industry.

A total of thirteen participants were selected from the population pool. The population selected for this study were a combination of industry professionals and academic professionals who had a strong background in hospitality and tourism and who had the ability to look at the courses from a global perspective, and at the same time keeping industry needs in mind. All the participants were experienced in their

specialization and had a very good knowledge of what the industry expected in its workforce in the coming years.

### **Instrument Development**

A survey instrument was developed by the researcher along with the assistance of the faculty in the department of Hospitality and Tourism. To obtain the maximum input from the participants in an efficient manner, the instrument was developed for clarity, ease of understanding and limited scope. It consisted of two pages, one for each course and was designed as a pamphlet.

The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the content of two graduate level courses in hospitality and tourism, and was divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire asked questions about the course titled- Issues in Hospitality and Tourism, and the second part of the questionnaire asked questions about the course titled – Strategic Management in Hospitality.

The instrument started out with outlining the objectives of each course. Each course was sub divided into their specific teaching modules and the content for each module was listed as a question to be evaluated on a likert scale of need to know, nice to know and not important. The scale allowed the evaluators the option of choosing the response that best described specific course content for each module.

Four critical questions used to critique each course included: 1). The appropriateness of the course, 2). What was missing in the course that would be beneficial to the student 3). Suggested improvements for the course and 4). What skills did they expect the student to have upon completion of the course?

A CD-ROM was also developed to go along with each questionnaire. The CD-ROM contained the course content of each course along with reading material for the students the presentation packages for each course and the learning material necessary for each module.

A draft of the instrument was developed by September 1999, and reviewed by a group of faculty members in the department of hospitality and tourism. The instrument was also pilot tested along with the CD-ROM by two students from the graduate program in hospitality and tourism for validity, reliability and understanding. The pilot study respondents were asked to carefully review the wordings of the questions presented, instrument structure, and instrument format. In addition, the respondents were asked to make comments concerning appropriateness of the survey items, terms, language difficulty, rating scale layout and general reaction.

### **Instrument Format**

The evaluation questionnaire was printed to resemble a pamphlet with four sides, two for each course. Each participant was provided with a CD-ROM that accompanied the questionnaire. The CD-ROM contained the courses, their outline, various features for online delivery, and the material taught in the respective courses. The CD-ROM provided the evaluator a better perspective of how the courses were taught online and what teaching materials are used as resources for the student. The questionnaire along with the CD-ROM provided the evaluators with information about the course content and how it supported the student in learning about working in the global work environment.

## **Data Collection**

Once the participants agreed to participate in the evaluation a questionnaire, CD-ROM, cover letter, consent form and a return envelope were mailed out to each one of them on September 27, 1999. The cover letter explained to each participant what was expected of the evaluation and how to go about using the questionnaire and the CD-ROM. They were requested to mail in the questionnaires by November 1, 1999. Because of the poor response in returning the completed questionnaires, the researcher decided to extend the dead line by two weeks. The participants were contacted again and requested to expedite the evaluation as soon as possible.

Nine of the thirteen participants returned their questionnaires by the due date, making it seventy percent of the sample size. Due to the complexity of the evaluation, the individual input necessary from each participant and the time involved to complete the questionnaire, the researcher accepted the nine returned questionnaires.

## **Data Analysis**

On November 20, 1999 the researcher began his analysis of the questionnaires. They were broken down into frequency counts. Each course was analyzed separately. The level of importance of each unit within a course was analyzed using a likert scale. Each objective within a unit was also analyzed by the researcher so as to identify the ones that were important to know, nice to know, and not important to know as expressed by the course evaluators.

The researcher analyzed the critiques at the end of each course evaluation. The critiques were divided into the following: appropriateness of the course content, missing content in the course, suggested improvements to the course content, and the skills

expected of the students upon completion of the course. The analysis provided the department of hospitality and tourism with an insight into the participant's perception and performance towards critical information needed by the students on completing the course. The critical analysis of the course content was deemed extremely important in the evaluation of the two courses as it assisted the instructors in reinforcing or modifying the content to meet industry needs.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the methodology used in this study including the research design, population and sample, instrument design and development, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV will describe the findings of the study.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Findings**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and validate the content of two selected courses. This evaluation will assist the faculty in the department of hospitality and tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in providing quality education. This study will provide the Department of Hospitality and Tourism with a better understanding of distance learning as it relates to online delivery.

The study was guided by four objectives:

1. To determine the importance of on-line education;
2. To evaluate the validity of the content being taught in the selected two courses;
3. To analyze and assess how the courses address the needs of the hospitality and tourism industry;
4. To identify key factors that would enhance and improve the content in the courses.

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the study and address the research objectives. The findings of the study came from the analysis of the data collected from the respondents through the means of a questionnaire. Data was collected from nine individuals with responsibilities in the field of hospitality and tourism, in senior management positions in various departments of the hospitality industry.

The findings of the study have been divided into two separate sections, one for each course. The researcher found that the frequency count for the courses titled Issues in Hospitality & Tourism (see Table 1), and Strategic Management (see Table 2), gave detailed information on respondents perception of each objective as important to know, nice to know, and not important to know. The tables also show that some respondents had





no comment on the course content. The tables further assist the reader by focusing on those objectives that are deemed most relevant to the industry.

It is to be noted that objective 4 and 20 in the table related to Issues in Hospitality and Tourism was found to be less important than the others. This can be related to the fact that the topics taught within these objectives were irrelevant to the industry. Within the unit on synthesis, objectives 22, 23, and 24 were found to be less important than objective 21 within the unit as it could have been a repetition of the same subject matter.

Within the table related to Strategic Management in Hospitality, objectives 3, 5, 7, and 11 had an equal number of respondents' who thought the objective was important or nice to know. This is probably due to the respondent's knowledge level or the fact that the objectives were related more to marketing than management.

Objective 20 and 24 seemed to have the largest number of respondents who felt they were nice rather than important to know. This can be reflected on the fact that they may be too theoretical for the industry that looks at things in a more practical picture, or that the objectives were just not critical enough to fit into the scheme of things. This information will provide content specialists with directions and suggestions for evaluating the course.

### **Issues in Hospitality & Tourism**

The most critical aspect of the evaluation was that each respondent expressed different views on the course content. The tabulation in table 1 shows that all the units within the course were validated by the respondents as important to know and nice to know except for two respondents who either had no comment on a specific objective or found a few objectives unimportant. The units on diversity and technology had the

highest frequency on their importance to student learning followed by units on globalization and stakeholder approach to issues in H&T. The unit on the synthesis of the course was deemed necessary by all respondents other than two who had no comment on the subject.

#### Appropriateness of the Course Content

All the respondents were in agreement on the appropriateness of the course content. The respondents found the course to have a good flow, was easy to comprehend, and was very comprehensive. It was pointed out that students need to be aware of the issues facing the industry and recognize the responsibility in keeping up to date with the rapidly changing world. Starting with an overview and building on it was considered pertinent as it brought students back in touch with the industry if they were out of school for a period of time.

#### Missing and Suggested Improvements to Course Content

The respondents had different needs that they found to be necessary and that were missing in the course. The researcher noted that the issue of being a change agent, issues on the governmental and economic impacts, and the issues on law and liability, all within the H&T industry needs to be added. It was noted that more emphasis needed to be placed on technology as the respondents felt it was critical for the future of sales, marketing and management.

The course was thought to stress on the global nature of the industry and the respondents found that the national, regional, and state issues needed to be incorporated. It was also suggested to expand on any possible trends and cycles that the industry goes

through. The respondents suggested that there be more real life examples and case studies for the students to better understand a specific issue.

#### Skills Expected of Student upon Completion of Course

The need for reading and keeping abreast with the latest issues and developments in H&T was a key expectation of most respondents. Leadership skills were another factor that was expected of the students, as they would be able to share this broad-based information and build a stronger organization. All the respondents found that this course would give students a better understanding of the issues faced by the industry and their effect on the organization.

#### Strategic Management

Of the nine respondents, two of them had no comment on the evaluation of the course. The remaining seven who evaluated the course found all the objectives within the individual units of the course to be important and nice to know. On a frequency count the units on strategic choice and assessing organizational direction were found to be not as important as the other units. It was also noted that none of the objectives within each unit were found to be unimportant by the respondents.

#### Appropriateness of Course Content

All the respondents expressed the appropriateness and the in-depth information in the course relating it to its importance in a highly competitive market. They also found that the content was appropriate with respect to the competitive nature and well being of the industry. Especially with increased competition and the rate of change, the respondents found it necessary to maintain a competitive edge and have an advantage within the industry.

The analysis and real world examples were found to assist the students in the ever-changing workforce.

#### Missing and Suggested Improvements to Course Content

Each individual respondent had a different view on what content was missing and what improvements needed to be made to the course. As strategy is organizing resources and competencies to leverage potential and achieve a competitive advantage, it was suggested to focus on the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid). How the course is going to help an entry level or mid management employee needs to be incorporated into the course.

It was suggested to include a unit on writing a strategic plan, complete with tools to identify micro/macro environmental happenings. Tactical action plans components were found to be missing in the course which are especially important for smaller firms. What the respondents found missing was where strategic management fits in an organization, starting from the mission statement to the roles and responsibilities. The respondents also suggested building charts as they are described in the course along with photographic support and a professional narrator.

#### Skills Expected of Student upon Completion of Course

A skill expected of a student on completion of the course was how he was going to adapt to the culture of an organization and be a change agent. How strategy and strategic thinking should impact their work when they enter the workforce was an industry expectation. The ability to have a vision and be able to avail of other alternatives to get there was a skill expected of a student.

Being able to design, develop and implement a sound strategic plan and monitor its progress and change it if necessary were other skills expected by the industry. The respondents also noted that a manager must be able to continuously reevaluate the organization position and have alternative strategies in mind to succeed in the rapidly changing world.

### **Summary**

This chapter describes information that was obtained by the researcher from the respondents via the questionnaire on course evaluation. The findings were evaluated separately for each course. There were individual tables for each course showing the frequency count for each objective within a course. The tables exhibit the respondents views on each objective on a scale from important to know and nice to know, to not important to know. This information helped the researcher analyze and validate the course content within each course.

All the respondents concluded that the course content within each course was valid and appropriate for the learning process. Each respondent found different material missing in the course and the respondents made suggestions for improving the course content. The respondents also expressed skills that were expected of students on completion of each of the courses.

Chapter V will summarize and conclude the study with recommendations and describe the limitations to the study.

## **Chapter V**

### **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **Summary**

The business world of today is very competitive. In order to meet the demand of internal and external customers, educational institutions need to formulate and provide instruction that is useful for the learner in the ever-changing workforce. Educating the learner and giving them an edge to continuously learn and grow in the global market is critical in the learning process. It is thus imperative to continuously evaluate courses developed and promoted by institutions so that they meet the needs of the industry. It is critical for industry professionals to suggest the skill set that they look for in students who take these courses so that the instructor can modify the course content to meet their requirements.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and validate the content of two selected courses. This evaluation assists the faculty in the department of Hospitality and Tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in providing quality education. The study also attempts to gain a better understanding of distance education and learning through technology.

To accomplish this, a review of literature was conducted. The review of literature was conducted and organized to research material relevant to the stated problem and to provide additional insight into the effects of technology on distance learning and the workforce. The research was subdivided into six categories which are as follows: impact of technology on distance learning, importance of online education, growth of online

education through globalization, advantages of asynchronous learning, impact of online education on the industry workforce, and the importance and need to evaluate the course content of online courses.

With this information, a questionnaire was developed to evaluate the two courses. The faculty in the department of hospitality and tourism were asked to give a list of potential industry professionals who they thought would be an appropriate population sample and would be willing to evaluate the courses. After considering all aspects of the sample the researcher identified thirteen professionals who were qualified to evaluate the courses. Questionnaires along with a CD-ROM containing the course content were sent to the identified industry professionals. Nine of the thirteen responded to the evaluation, making it 70% of the sample size.

### **Conclusion**

Each course was evaluated on a frequency count. The objectives within each course were tabulated to show the respondents view on a scale of important to know, nice to know, not important to know, and no comment. This table assisted the instructors in assessing the importance of each objective from an industry perspective.

The respondents found that the units within each course were essential and necessary for student learning except for a few who had no comment on the course content. The majority of the respondents viewed the content as important to know.

The findings were evaluated course wise. Within the course on Issues in Hospitality & Tourism, the units on diversity and technology had the highest frequency on their importance to student learning followed by units on globalization and stakeholder

approach to issues in H&T. The unit on the synthesis of the course was deemed necessary by all respondents other than two who had no comment on the subject.

Within the Course on Strategic Management, of the nine respondents, two of them had no comment on the evaluation of the course. The remaining seven who evaluated the course found all the objectives within the individual units of the course to be important and nice to know. On a frequency count the units on strategic choice and assessing organizational direction were found to be not as important as the other units. It was also noted that none of the objectives within each unit were found to be unimportant by the respondents.

Each of the courses had a set of questions on the appropriateness of the course content, missing and suggested improvements to the course content and the skills required of students on completion of the course that the respondents were asked to validate. Each respondent had varied suggestions for improvement of content that they found missing that should be included. This included writing a complete strategic plan, including tactical action plan components, and building charts with photographic support for the Strategic Management course. Some of the suggestions for improvement in the course titled Issues in H&T included issues on law and liability, economic and governmental impacts, and issues of technology in sales and marketing.

The respondents also expressed various skills that they expected from the student on completing the course. They expected the students to build stronger organizations through leadership skills and adapt to its culture and be change agents. The ability to have a vision and be able to design, develop and implement a sound strategic plan were other skills expected of the students.

The data from this study suggests that the content within the two selected courses were valid and appropriate for student learning through distance education. Most of the respondents confirmed that the objectives within each course were important to know, other than a few who found some of the objectives nice to know but not important from the industry perspective.

The researcher notes that it was an extremely difficult task getting industry professionals to evaluate the course. Most of the professionals contacted were unwilling to take part in the study as they expressed a lack of time. The researcher also notes that those who did evaluate the courses may have done it out of obligation rather than the want and need to do so. It was deemed imperative by the researcher that the respondents evaluate the courses because they valued the effects of the learning process on the student and what the industry expected of a student on completing the course.

### **Recommendations**

As distance education is the learning trend of the future, it is expressly important that what is taught by an institution online is what is expected of the industry for the effective performance of the student. There are many factors that affect the evaluation and validation processes of a distance learning curriculum. The researcher offers the following recommendations for further study in this area.

All courses, as they are being formulated for online delivery should be evaluated by industry professionals who feel there is a long-term payoff to the industry through student knowledge. The researcher recommends that international professionals in the hospitality field also evaluate the course content so that the instructor and the institution get a global perspective on the content delivered in each course. The evaluations must be completed

by industry professionals who are academically inclined and who are willing to assess and validate the content rather than do it out of obligation for the researcher.

It is recommended that the courses be evaluated at specific intervals so that the content of a course does not go obsolete and that it meets the present needs and requirements of the ever-changing industrial environment. The researcher also recommends that students who have taken the course evaluate it for its content so the instructor has another perspective to consider while constructing an online course. If possible, it is strongly recommended that the institutions invite industry professional to evaluate the courses on-site. By physically walking them through the course and conducting focus group sessions, the instructors will not only have a better understanding of industry requirements in a course but also get feedback on the delivery style of the course.

Finally it is imperative that the instructor of an online course and the academic institution promoting the course consider the knowledge base that they feel a student should have as the primary factor in constructing an online course. This gives students a broader knowledge of a subject and a wider spectrum to choose from in the global market which may or may not be the hospitality industry.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A

Date

Mr/Ms. \_\_\_\_\_

Dear

Thank you for offering to evaluate the first On-line courses offered by the University of Wisconsin-Stout, Department of Hospitality and Tourism, and promoted by a global partnership.

As an industry leader, we feel that you will be able to provide us with valuable feedback. We need your evaluation, so as to ensure we are meeting the needs of our prospective customers.

This program is designed to provide a M.S. in Hospitality and Tourism for students who are not able to attend scheduled classroom instruction. On successful completion of the entire program, the participant will be awarded a Masters of Science degree in Hospitality and Tourism, from the university.

On completion of the program the student will be able to

- Function more effectively at upper management levels of the organization.
- Develop research, critical analysis and problem solving skills.
- Better manage their own learning.
- Utilize technology to maintain or develop a company's competitive edge.

The courses offered for the entire program are

Group I

- Issues in Hospitality and Tourism.

- Strategic Management in Hospitality.
- Managing Finance in the Hospitality Industry.
- Technology in the Business Environment – Communication marketing.

#### Group II

- Leadership Skills in Hospitality and Tourism.
- Quality Assurance and Customer Service.
- Application of Research to Practical Hospitality Problems.
- Role of Culture in Hospitality Management.

#### Group III

- Managing People in the Hospitality Field.
- Hospitality and Tourism Operations.
- Seminars.
- Thesis.

Please find enclosed a description of the courses; Issues in Hospitality and Tourism, and Strategic Management in Hospitality, along with their objectives. We would like you to give us a feedback on the content, and also if there is anything that you think should be included in the course, which would enhance student learning. Enclosed also please find a CD-ROM with the necessary material to evaluate the courses.

We would appreciate it if we could have your feedback on the content returned to the department by November 1, 1999. A self addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Thanking you

Mahesh Reddy

## **APPENDIX B**

### **COURSE EVALUATION**

Please evaluate the contents of the Issues in Hospitality & Tourism and the Strategic Management courses using the enclosed CD-ROM with instructions to access the on-line course content. Identify after each objective how you perceive its importance. At the end of the evaluation of each course, we are looking for your ideas on suggested improvements and your perceptions of the skills students should have at the conclusion of the course.

Thank you!

#### **COURSE – I - ISSUES IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**

##### **OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to:

- Develop processes and procedures for defining and investigating the trends, issues, and problems confronting the various components of the hospitality industry.
- Investigate the causes, effects, and impacts of the trends, issues, and problems affecting the industry.
- Complete an in-depth analysis of critical trends, issues, and problems affecting a specific sector of the hospitality industry.
- Identify external and internal stakeholder groups and their impact on their place of employment.

**Rating the Course Content: 1 = Important to know 2 = Nice to know 3 = Not important**

#### **UNIT – 1 INTRODUCTION**

1. Course overview and introduction to the On-line learning environment.			1
2	3		
2. Understand the various approaches to the investigation of issues and trends in H&T.		1	2
3			
 UNIT – 2 THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY			
3. Definition and scope of the hospitality and tourism industry.		1	2
3			
4. Tourism as an interdisciplinary system and its relationship with all fields of academia and industry.		1	2
3			
5. Understand and analyze the current trends and their impact on H&T.		1	2
3			
6. Future growth of the H&T industry utilizing the open systems model as a framework.		1	2
			3
 UNIT – 3 GLOBALIZATION			
7. Impact of globalization on the H&T industry.		1	2
3			
8. Managing organizations for global effectiveness.			1
2	3		
9. Implementing global strategy.		1	2
3			
10. Understanding the different cultural and institutional attributes for global marketing.		1	2
3			
 UNIT – 4 DIVERSITY			
11. Impacts and issues of diversity in H&T.			1
2	3		
12. Effects of cultural diversity and the need for multiculturalism in H&T.		1	2
3			
13. Issues related to cultural perceptions in H&T and the trends towards increased understanding of diversity within the H&T industry.		1	2
3			
 UNIT – 5 TECHNOLOGY			
14. Effects of technology and its role in hospitality and tourism management.			1
2	3		
15. Analyzing the current and future technological needs of a H&T organization			1
2	3		

16. Identifying emerging technologies and reflecting on their impacts and benefits for the future growth in H&T. 1 2  
3

UNIT – 6 STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO ISSUES IN H&T

17. Identification of both internal and external stakeholders and their roles. 1 2  
3

18. Analyzing stakeholder perspectives and identifying issues impacting their organization. 1 2 3

19. Analysis of a H&T issue and its impact on internal and external stakeholders 1 2  
3

20. Comparison of stakeholder perspectives and its effect on hospitality and tourism. 1 2  
3

UNIT – 7 SYNTHESIS

21. Overview of issues, problems, and trends in hospitality and tourism. 1 2  
3

22. Impact of various issues on the internal and external stakeholders. 1  
2 3

23. Impact of issues on organizations within the H&T industry. 1 2  
3

24. Reflect on potential organization strategies that can be implemented to address the issues and trends in hospitality and tourism. 1  
2 3

Critique

Please share your comments about the course here.

1. Appropriateness of the content:

2. Missing Content:

3. Suggested Improvements:

4. What skills would you expect the student to have upon completion of this course:

second course → Please continue to evaluate the

## COURSE - II – STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

### OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of the course the student will be able to have:

- A thorough knowledge of the strategic management process.
- An ability to analyze the external environment of the hospitality organization including the stakeholder, industry, and the general environment sectors.
- An ability to analyze an organization in terms of identifying its competencies and limitations across its domain of operation.
- An ability to identify a hospitality organization's strategic posture.
- A strong base of knowledge concerning generic organizational strategies and their likely use.
- An ability to recommend a strategic direction for a hospitality organization based on its current internal and external environmental situation.
- A strong base of knowledge concerning the effective implementation of strategic change in hospitality based organizations.

**Rating the Course Content: 1 = Important to know 2 = Nice to know 3 = Not important**

### UNIT – 1 BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Comprehension of the various steps in strategic management.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |
| 2. Understanding the “language” of strategic management.  | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |
| 3. To have some knowledge of the contributions of major writers in the field of strategic management. | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |
| 4. Understanding the use of strategic management in different contexts.                               | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |
| 5. Understanding the different views or “schools of thought” concerning strategy development.         | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |

### UNIT – 2 EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Development of a conceptual framework for understanding and analyzing an organization's external environment.                  | 1 | 2 |
| 3   |   |   |
| 7. Able to identify important external “direct” stakeholders and determine bargaining positions between them and an organization. |   | 1 |
| 2 3   |   |   |

- |   |   |   |     |
|---|---|---|-----|
| 8. Able to describe industry “structure” and “trends” through analysis<br>of rival firms and strategic groups in an industry. |   |   | 1   |
|   | 2 | 3 |     |
| 9. Able to identify important trends in the general environment<br>that may effect an organization’s future performance.      |   |   | 1 2 |
|   | 3 |   |     |
| 10. Identification of the major “threats” and “opportunities” in an<br>organization’s environment.                            |   |   | 1 2 |
|   | 3 |   |     |

UNIT – 3 INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

- |   |   |   |     |
|---|---|---|-----|
| 11. Ability to describe an organization’s strategic posture.  |   |   | 1 2 |
|   | 3 |   |     |
| 12. Ability to describe an organization’s value chain.  |   |   | 1   |
|   | 2 | 3 |     |
| 13. Able to identify an organization’s resources as “necessary” or “unique”.                          |   |   | 1   |
|   | 2 | 3 |     |
| 14. Able to identify an organization’s competence as “threshold” or “core’.                           |   |   | 1   |
|   | 2 | 3 |     |
| 15. Able to identify important strengths and weaknesses of an<br>organization’s internal environment. |   |   | 1 2 |
|   | 3 |   |     |
| 16. Able to analyze an organization’s existing culture.   |   |   | 1 2 |
|   | 3 |   |     |

UNIT – 4 STRATEGIC CHOICE

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| 17. To develop a strong understanding of the concept of strategy.                |   |   | 1 |
|  | 2 | 3 |   |
| 18. To develop an understanding of the meaning of various “generic” strategies.  |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. To understanding of the role of a corporate center in the strategic process. |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. To develop the ability to provide a sound strategic alternative for a firm.  |   |   |   |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |

UNIT – 5 ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION

21. Able to assess the suitability of a strategic alternative.		1
2    3		
22. Able to assess the acceptability of a strategic alternative.		
1    2    3		
23. Able to assess the feasibility of a strategic alternative.		1
2    3		
24. To have knowledge of the various methods by which firms select strategy.		
1    2    3		
25. To be familiar with the various methods firms use to assess performance.		
1    2    3		

## UNIT – 6 STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

26. To develop a thorough knowledge of various ideal types of organizational structures.	1	2
3		
27. To develop a knowledge of the impact of culture and politics on organization change.	1	2
3		
28. To develop a knowledge of the problems and processes involved in organizational change.	1	2
3		
29. To have an understanding of the necessary characteristics of “change agents” in organizations.		1
2    3		
30. To know the characteristics of a learning organization.		1
2    3		

### Critique

Please share your comments about the course here:

1. Appropriateness of the content:
2. Missing content:
3. Suggested improvements:

4. What skills would you expect the student to have upon completion of this course:

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**Your feedback is greatly appreciated. Thank You!**



**Table 1: Evaluation Table of Participant Frequency Count.**

(N = 9)

**Issues in Hospitality and Tourism**

		No Comment	Important to Know	Nice to Know	Not Important to Know
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>				
	1. Course overview and introduction to the on-line learning environment	1	7	1	
	2. Understand the various approaches to the investigation of issues and trends in H&T.		7	2	
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY</b>				
	3. Definition and scope of the hospitality and tourism industry.		5	3	1
	4. Tourism as an interdisciplinary system and its relationship with all fields of academia and industry.		3	6	
	5. Understand and analyze the current trends and their impact on H&T.		7	2	
	6. Future growth of the H&T industry utilizing the open systems model as a framework.		6	3	
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>GLOBALIZATION</b>				
	7. Impact of globalization on the H&T industry.		7	2	
	8. Managing organizations for global effectiveness.	1	6	2	
	9. Implementing global strategy.		7	1	1
	10. Understanding the different cultural and institutional attributes for global marketing.		7	2	
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>DIVERSITY</b>				
	11. Impacts and issues of diversity in H&T.		8	1	
	12. Effects of cultural diversity and the need for multiculturalism in H&T.		9		
	13. Issues related to cultural perceptions in H&T and the trends towards increased understanding of diversity within the H&T industry.		8	1	
<b>UNIT 5</b>	<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>				
	14. Effects of technology and its role in H&T management.		9		
	15. Analyzing the current and future technological needs of an organization.		8	1	
	16. Identifying emerging technologies and reflecting on their impacts and benefits for the future growth in H&T.		8		1
<b>UNIT 6</b>	<b>STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO ISSUES IN H&amp;T</b>				
	17. Identification of both internal and external stakeholders and their roles.		6	3	
	18. Analyzing stakeholder perspectives and identifying issues impacting their organization.		5	4	
	19. Analysis of a H&T issue and its impact on stakeholders.		7	2	
	20. Comparison of stakeholder perspectives and its effect on H&T.		4	5	
<b>UNIT 7</b>	<b>SYNTHESIS</b>				
	21. Overview of issues, problems, and trends in hospitality and tourism.	2	5	2	
	22. Impact of various issues on the internal and external stakeholders.	2	4	3	
	23. Impact of issues on organizations within the H&T industry.	2	4	3	
	24. Reflect on potential organization strategies that can be implemented and address the issues and trends in hospitality and tourism.	2	4	3	

**Table 2: Evaluation Table of Participant Frequency Count.**

(N = 9)

**Strategic Management in Hospitality**

		No Comment	Importan t to Know	Nice to Know	Not Important to Know
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT</b>				
	1. Comprehension of the various steps in strategic management.	1	6	2	
	2. Understanding the “Language” of strategic management.	1	6	2	
	3. To have some knowledge of the contributions of major writers in the field of strategic management.	1	4	4	
	4. Understanding the use of strategic management in different contexts.	1	5	3	
	5. Understanding the different views or “schools of thought” concerning strategy development.	1	4	4	
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS</b>				
	6. Development of a conceptual framework for understanding and analyzing an organization’s external environment.	1	6	2	
	7. Able to identify important external “direct” stakeholders and determine bargaining positions between them and an organization.	1	4	4	
	8. Able to describe industry “structure” and “trends” through analysis of rival firms and strategic groups in an industry.	1	5	3	
	9. Able to identify important trends in the general environment that may effect an organization’s future performance.	1	6	2	
	10. Identification of the major “threats” and “opportunities” in an organization’s environment.	1	7	1	
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS</b>				
	11. Ability to describe an organization’s strategic posture.	1	4	4	
	12. Ability to describe an organization’s value chain.	1	6	2	
	13. Able to identify an organization’s resources as “necessary” or “unique.”	1	6	2	
	14. Able to identify an organization’s competence as “threshold” or “core.”	1	6	2	
	15. Able to identify important strengths and weaknesses of an organization’s internal environment.	1	8		
	16. Able to analyze an organization’s existing culture.	1	8		
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>STRATEGIC CHOICE</b>				
	17. To develop a strong understanding of the concept of strategy.	2	5	2	
	18. To develop an understanding of the meaning of various “generic” strategy.	2	3	4	
	19. To understanding the role of a corporate center in the strategic process.	2	3	4	
	20. To develop the ability to provide a sound strategic alternative for a firm.	2	3	4	
<b>UNIT 5</b>	<b>ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION</b>				
	21. Able to assess the suitability of a strategic alternative.	2	2	5	
	22. Able to assess the acceptability of a strategic alternative.	2	3	4	
	23. Able to assess the feasibility of a strategic alternative.	2	4	3	
	24. To have knowledge of the various methods by which firms select strategy.	2	2	5	
	25. To be familiar with the various methods firms use to assess performance.	2	4	3	

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<b>UNIT 6</b>	<b>STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION</b>			
	26. To develop a thorough knowledge of various ideal types of organizational structures.	2	4	3
	27. To develop a knowledge of the impact of culture and politics on organization change.	2	6	1
	28. To develop a knowledge of the problems and processes involved in organizational change.	2	6	1
	29. To have an understanding of the necessary characteristics of “change agents” in organizations.	2	7	
	30. To know the characteristics of a learning organization.	2	6	1

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