EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS

EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FRONT LINE ASSOCIATES IN THE HOTEL SECTOR IN SYDNEY: DEMONSTRATING KIRKPATRICK' S MODEL

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
I, Andreas Wahyu Gunawan Putra, confirm that this dissertation is solely my work and the material in this dissertation has never been used, wholly or partially, in any publication or for any examination purposes.

Signed: [redacted]

Date: 12 December 2003
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Andreas Wahyu Gunawan Putra
December 2003
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following portfolio of materials fulfils the requirements for the Doctor of Business Administration degree at the Sydney Graduate School of Management – University of Western Sydney. It comprises as follows:

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Research methodology
- Field Study
- Refereed Publications

The topic of my project is “Evaluating Training Programs in the Hospitality Industry in Sydney for Front Line Associates: Demonstrating Kirkpatrick’s Model”. Research was undertaken by means of a broad and comprehensive literature search, a field study and the development of four working papers.

Putra (2002b: 1) states, “The hospitality industry appears to be facing increasing competitive pressures to improve the quality of its delivery of products and services”. For many hotels, success depends largely on the availability of qualified front line associates who are able to translate and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service. Hotel companies, thus, must take training programs for front line associates seriously to accommodate the growing pressure to provide qualified associates. Consequently, many hotels now highlight training activities for front line associates as a means of providing an outstanding service for their customers.
However, there is often scepticism about whether training actually pays off for organisations. In other words, many training practitioners and/or scholars (e.g., Ichniowski, Shaw, and Prennushi, 1997; Polesky, 1998; Pfeffer, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Tharenou, 2001) have questioned whether training improves organisational effectiveness through measures such as job performance, productivity, return on investment, reduced customers' complaints as well as a more knowledgeable, skilful and positive workforce. Despite the importance of the topic, there appears to be little research on evaluating training for front line associates in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector. Therefore, this project is arguably 'pioneering' in its analysis of applying the model chosen. It has demonstrated through empirical evidence the usefulness of the model to the four hotels in Sydney.

This project has investigated evaluating training programs by analysing the reaction of the trainees, learning gained by the trainees, transfer of learning to the workplace by the trainees and training outcomes (e.g., increased job performance, increased motivation, reduced customers' complaints, increased knowledge, and improved skills) as a result of the trainees' application of newly acquired skills and knowledge on the job.

Subsequently, through a review of relevant literature, a field study and the development of a series of working papers, this research has been successfully demonstrating Kirkpatrick's model at the four hotels in Sydney.

In addition, this project is expected to be useful to other training practitioners and/or scholars who are interested in undertaking further research in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector.
I declare that this is an original piece of work, which has not been published or submitted for any other degree.

Andreas W. Gunawan Putra
(dd/mth/year) 12/12/03
EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FRONT LINE ASSOCIATES IN THE HOTEL SECTOR IN SYDNEY: DEMONSTRATING KIRKPATRICK’S MODEL

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LITERATURE REVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is expected to expand rapidly (Foroohar, 2002). For example, between 1991 and 1995 international tourism grew from 450 million international tourists to 567 million (Weaver, 1998 cited in Black, Ham, and Weiler, 2000) and it is estimated that international tourist arrivals will double between 1990 and 2010 (Black et al. 2000). Growing tourist arrivals can assist many nations to develop their economy (Cetron, 2001; Ramirez and Hartel, 2001). The hospitality industry generated US $445 billion dollars in 1999 (WTO, 1999 cited in Ramirez and Hartel, 2001) and has also enabled many countries to improve their national economy. Consequently, it has become the most important legally conducted business in the world (Ramirez and Hartel, 2001). Indeed, the tourism and the hospitality industry is one of the most important job creators in the world (Cetron, 2001; Ramirez and Hartel, 2001; Affolter, 2001).

In addition, the rapid development and widespread international adoption of information technologies has resulted in competition in the hospitality industry being focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of systems and processes (Lazarevic and Terziovski, 2000). For example, the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, can no longer gain competitive advantage through technologies, companies' brand image, and physical facilities, but instead must focus on the quality of service provision to customers (Ramirez and Hartel, 2001). Consequently, the hotel sector is being 'forced' to focus on their front line associates through the delivery of quality services by a skilled and competent workforce in order to gain a distinctive profile which ultimately may lead to a sustainable competitive advantage (Christou and Eaton, 2000; Lazarevic and Terziovski,
2000). Therefore, training and education of people involved in tourism and the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, is generally regarded as a high priority (Go, 1994 cited in Black et al., 2000, and Whinney, 1996 cited in Black et al., 2000). As stated previously, most organisations need to know whether training actually improves organisational effectiveness and this is one of several reasons for the importance of conducting training program evaluation.

Training program evaluation is essential to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the industry, employers and trainees, and ensures that the program is kept current and relevant to changes in an ever-changing industry (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Black et al., 2000). Most training practitioners and/or scholars have relied upon Kirkpatrick's model which consists of level one (reaction), level two (learning), level three (behaviour) and level four (results) as a standard in the training evaluation field (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Abernathy, 1999). In recognition of the need to evaluate training programs in the industry, Kirkpatrick’s model appears workable in determining the effectiveness of any training program offered for front line associates in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector.

However, most training program evaluations are only conducted at level one (Kirkpatrick, 1998) and this is inadequate. Many hotel managers seldom venture into level two, three and four where they need to measure increased knowledge, behaviour changes and the impact of the training upon the organisation (Smith, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998).

It can be argued, therefore, that conducting a comprehensive training program evaluation requires the application of all 4 of Kirkpatrick’s levels. Each level requires the evaluation of the preceding levels.
As mentioned previously, the tourism industry is expected to expand (Foroohar, 2002), the hospitality industry is expected to boom (Ramirez and Hartel, 2001) and the need to provide training to ensure a quality service is imperative (Melia, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Ramirez and Hartel, 2001). It is important to conduct training program evaluation to help ensure that the programs are having the desired organisational level results.

A review of the literature on the effectiveness of training program evaluation is forthcoming, under the headings of tourism, the hospitality industry, training, and Kirkpatrick's evaluation model. The issues and problems in each of these areas is discussed along with current illustrations.

Following this review is a chapter which will discuss the use of Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model at four hotels in Sydney, and review the implications that can be drawn from the research. The final chapter highlights the future context of tourism and the hospitality industry as well as training in the hotel sector, and the benefits of conducting training evaluation.
2. TOURISM

In the 21st century, the tourism and the hospitality industry will be the largest industry in the world, and today it is estimated to provide about 255 million jobs or about 10 percent of world employment (Spillane, 2001).

For many countries, both developed and developing, tourism is a very important source of foreign currency earnings and employment (Klancnik and Peressolova, 2002). In addition, Klancnik and Peressolova (2002) state that worldwide receipts amounted in US dollars to 462 billion in 2001, which means US$ 1.3 billion or in euros 1.4 billion a day. Compared to 2000, this is a decline of 2.6 per cent from 474 billion. Expressed in euros, international tourism receipts amounted to 516 billion, up 0.5 per cent from 514 billion in 2000 (World Tourism Organisation – WTO report in 2000 cited in Klancnik and Peressolova, 2002).

According to Uysal (1998 cited in Formica, 2002) the tourism industry consists of two essential components: the ‘origin’ (labelled ‘tourism demand’ – representing the tourists) and a ‘destination’ (labelled ‘tourism supply’, such as natural resources, cultural attractions, and historical monuments). In addition, tourist activities, having also grown into one of the world’s largest industries, are comprised of elements such as attractions (which is a part of tourism supply), services, and infrastructures; together, these elements comprise the total appeal of natural and manmade characteristics that may exist in an area (Hall, 1995, 1998).

In a highly competitive international situation, many countries supply tourism services. The benefits a nation can gain from foreign tourism depends upon the total demand and its existing market power (Todd, 2001). Market power depends upon the degree to which
a nation can differentiate its tourism services relative to those of its potential competitors, whereas, the total demand has been driven by factors such as growth in real incomes (Angelo and Vladimir, 2001); the advance in personal wealth as expressed in the ability of individuals to generate resources beyond those needed to pay for life’s basic needs; increases in leisure time; peace amongst nations and freedom from administrative restraint on international travel as well as freedom within international currency markets; and the expansion of fast, efficient and widely affordable public transport coupled with wide access to private transport (Todd, 2001). Given the expectation that the number of international travellers will increase, the tourism industry can, arguably, make a major contribution to the economies of nations.

The emerging significance of tourism as a major contributor to the economies of individual nations and the global economy has been widely reported in the popular media for at least the last decade (Nankervis, 2000). Nankervis (2000) has listed some encouraging evidence such as, The Australian (11 February 1997) which states that ‘doomsayers get it wrong, as tourists ignore Hanson’; ‘Policymakers seek new sights’ (The Australian, 17 October 1997); ‘Pressure of numbers adds up to inevitable caps on tourists’ (The Australian, 18 October 1997) which emphasise the benefits of tourism for employment and the economy.

As previously mentioned, tourism will generate economic impacts on the designated countries in terms of job opportunities and an injection of ‘new money’ into a destination (Frechtling, 1987; Hall and Jenkins, 1989; Dickman, 1994; Hall, 1995, 1998; Archer and Cooper, 1995). According to Dwyer, Forsyth, Madden, and Spurr (2001) an injection of ‘new money’ or direct impacts are reflected in the increased sales revenues of firm catering to tourist needs for different goods and services. Dwyer et al. (2001) explain further that some of these firms are within, and others outside, what may be regarded as
the tourist industry'. These firms and organisations in turn purchase goods and services from various suppliers within and outside of the destination region. On the other hand, indirect effects result as Dwyer et al. (2001) describe from 'flow ons' when direct suppliers purchase inputs from other firms in the region which, in turn, purchase inputs from other firms and so on. Furthermore, Dwyer et al. (2001) argue that almost every industry in the economy is affected to some extent by the indirect effects of the initial tourist expenditure. For example, in Australia where around 4.4 million backpackers visit different destinations each year, they spend on average $65 per day. Their expenditure levels by country are: $59 for the British; $51 for Japanese; and $82 for Americans (Information based on ABS, 1999 cited in the SMH, 7 May 2002) and this can have a positive impact on the country's economy. The opinion of backpackers boost tourism is supported by the Australian Tourist Commission Managing Director, Ken Boundy, (cited in the Sunday Telegraph 21 July 2002: 22) who states, "backpackers helped boost the lagging tourism market after the September 11". Melbourne university's current research findings also support this (the Sunday Telegraph, 29 September 2002).

However, even though the media seems to support the importance of having tourists and to show that tourists have contributed to the economy directly and indirectly, the media has also been quick to point out the vulnerability of the industry (Nankervis, 2000). For example: as Nankervis (2000) has shown, The Age (27 May 1997) states 'Study shows fewer Asian Tourists'; The Australian Financial Review (29 October 1997 and 12 November 1997) states, 'Asian crisis threatens tourism jobs' and 'Asia shock hits tourism'. In addition, more recently the Sun Herald (26 May 2002) headlines in travel guidebooks state 'Queensland racist: Beware'; the Sunday Telegraph (26 May 2002) says 'Queensland: Dangers and Annoyances'. The Sunday Telegraph (6 October 2002) headlines is 'tourism industry in crisis'. Likewise, the Sunday Telegraph (22 September
2002) states, ‘hotel job loss fear as tourism crisis’. More recently, the US government will soon introduce ‘finger prints’ for travellers to identify terrorist suspects or anyone who may be linked to the Al Qaeda network (the SMH, 27 August 2002). Some travellers may perceive this as ‘racist’, particularly those from the Middle East or of Middle Eastern appearance (the SMH, 27 August 2002). Also this ‘finger print’ scenario may be seen as related to ‘religious issues’ (ABC TV report, 6 June 2002). In addition, news released by The US National Security Entry Exit Registration System (cited in the SMH, 27 August 2002: 3) stated, “Australian travellers to the US could be fingerprinted and photographed under a new United States law”. More recently, the bomb blast in Bali (the SMH, 14 October 2002) could affect the tourism industry worldwide. It can be said that the threats to tourism and the hospitality industry during the past decade have flourished even as it struggled to cope with difficult challenges (Nankervis, 2000; Cetron, 2001) making it vulnerable despite its growing role in the world economy.

In the period from 1997 to the present, tourism has seemed to be on the brink of collapse as a result of the combined effects of the ‘Asian economic crises’, ‘Mexican effect’, ‘Middle East crises’, ‘Airlines collapsed’, ‘terrorist threats’ and more recently ‘terror in Bali’ (the SMH, 14 October 2002). According to tourism economic research produced by the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) and Tourism Satellite Accounts (cited in The Press Wire Report, 2002), the industry in the Asia Pacific region has suffered badly due to the global impact of September 11, with an accumulative loss of 5.7 per cent in travel and tourism demand, and the loss of 4.4 million jobs equivalent, in years 2001 and 2002. Australia has lost nearly $1 billion due to the damage to tourism from September 11 and tourism decline represents a foreign exchange loss of $2 billion a year and more than 12,000 jobs (the SMH, 3 September 2002). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS, 2002 cited in the SMH 25 January 2002)
figures already show that as a result of September 11, the Asian economic downturn and the Ansett collapse combined with the end of the Olympic games, only 4.8 million visitors arrived in 2001 – a 2.6 per cent fall on 2000 and a cost of $900 million to the economy.

In addition, the Australian airline industry remains in limbo; for example, the capacity of the Australian airline continues to be an issue in the marketplace, following the Ansett collapse (the SMH, 3 September 2002). Furthermore, Qantas looks certain to shed hundreds of jobs in its regional airline as concerns mount over the future of country flights (the SMH, 6 May 2002). Many of the job losses will take place in provincial centres, where aviation has long been a community mainstay. These losses will disrupt regional tourism, which relies on country airlines (the SMH, 6 May 2002). Moreover, the implementation of a bed tax in Australia (all hotel room rates were subject to an additional 10 per cent bed tax) has contributed to a slump in the number of tourists staying at hotels (the Sun Herald, 15 September 2002). Furthermore, the imposition of the Good Services and Tax (GST) on food and services caused meal prices to soar, and as consequence customers have to pay extra for every meal and service (the Sun Herald, 15 September 2002). All these negative factors reflect the perception that the tourism and hospitality industry was (and is) especially susceptible to negative impacts on economic changes in the region and throughout the world (Nankervis, 2000) and also on international security, massive airline layoffs, introduction of new taxes and bad publicity.

To overcome the drop in tourism, the Australian Tourist Commission is spending $10 million on marketing Australia in the US alone (The Tourism Task Force, 2002 cited in the SMH 25 January 2002), the federal government is allocating an extra $8 million over four years to advertise holidays within Australia as part of the 'see Australia' campaign
(the Sunday Telegraph, 5 May 2002), increasing its security budget (the SMH 23 May, 2002), ‘removing taxes on meals during business hours’ (the Sunday Telegraph, 7 April, 2002), re-introducing some tax deductions for business lunches to help the industry rebound (the Sunday Telegraph, 5 May, 2002), tightening visa approvals (the SMH 24 May, 2002), and providing new security x-rays at major Airports (the SMH 24 May, 2002). Even though these responses may be insufficient to entirely overcome the slump in tourism, they can assist the industry to bounce back. The Tourism Task Force report (2002) states that there are definite signs of recovery in some of Australia’s tourism markets. WTTC (2002) also supports this, predicting that the Australian tourism industry will rebound in 2003 with a massive growth rate of six per cent after a year of stabilisation and recovery in 2002.

Another possible solution to the slump might be for the industry itself to react positively and swiftly through cutting costs, creative advertising, innovative promotions, seeking out new market opportunities, focusing on stabilisation and recovery. This process requires continued strategic alliances between the private and public sectors (Crotts, Buhalits and March, 2000). In addition, this can also be fostered through strategic partnering; e.g., United, Lufthansa, Air Canada, SAS and THAI create Star Alliance to bring benefits to airline customers; Garuda Airways and Hilton Hotel Sydney have established a marketing relationship that benefits travellers (the Hotel Online Hospitality News Headlines, 2002). These alliances are expected to be able to minimise the negative impact on tourism.

To meet the demands of the future, firms need to develop programs for partnering that will facilitate the necessary cultural and operating changes required to build successful and durable alliances and partnerships (Crotts et al. 2000). Through alliances and partnering, firms can also gain market dominance and global reach that are beyond the
resources of one firm to create and sustain alone (Crotts et al. 2000). All these approaches may, in one part, bring the tourism industry into successful globalisation despite a downturn in the industry.

Dealing with worldwide globalisation trends does not seem to be new to the tourism industry. Mention has been made of the globalisation of tourism. This term is frequently used, but is ambiguous (Hall, 1995, 1998). It should be used to refer to the scale and content of tourism activity as well as the distribution of tourism activity (Hall, 1995, 1998; Lickorish and Jenkins, 1999). Muller (2001: 62) stated that "everything is in a state of flux: demand, labour, know-how and capital are all flowing to where the biggest hopes for the future lie, with the resultant standardisation of production technologies, business strategies, marketing plans and management styles". Although tourist production is tied to local conditions, the tourism industry cannot avoid being affected by globalisation (Muller, 2001; Dolnicar, 2002). In dealing with globalisation, governments' support and recognition of the industry is obviously imperative (Nankervis, 2000). However, as Nankervis (2000) argues, it is merely one of the multiple variables which determine the industry's survival and competitiveness. The role of governments in tourism seems complex, multi faceted and variable, but nonetheless crucial to the maintenance and survival of the industry (e.g., Hall, 1994a; Hall and Jenkins, 1995 cited in Nankervis, 2000). Broadly it may include:

- formulation of tourism policies and plans (e.g., marketing, budgeting, human resources, socio-cultural and environmental impact);
- negotiation of tourism friendly international agreements (e.g., visas, open sky agreements);
- provision of the necessary physical infrastructure for tourism (e.g., telephone line, accommodation, roads, public transports, cleanliness, information booth, etc).
☐ provision of direct tourism service (e.g., railways, public busy systems, ecotourism operators, airport management, government hotels, tours and tour guides, etc);

☐ regulation of tourist entry and exit (e.g., passport control, quarantine, customs) and overall industry standards (e.g., food handling, occupational competencies, building requirements);

☐ regulation of parts of the industry (e.g., tour guide training and tourist police);

☐ data collection and analysis of data related to tourism trends (e.g., New South Wales Tourism Bureau, Tourism Task Force, and independent bodies);

☐ promotion of tourism, funding and support (work closely with international airlines, hotel chains, and private sectors)

Of the possible roles that governments can play indirectly in the tourism industry, those which are arguably the most crucial for its maintenance, sustainability, and competitiveness are the provision of appropriate and timely infrastructure, ensuring that negative environmental impacts are minimised. The government can influence this through legislation and regulation of industry standards in areas as diverse as industrial relations, building codes, and licensing (Hall, 1995, 1998; Fayos-Sola, 1996). The degree of government involvement in tourism also depends upon the political systems of individual nations (Hall, 1994a). The government also influences tourism directly. For example, in Australia the government has had a major entrepreneurial function in tourism and one major direct government involvement which is an example of this is its responsibility for destination promotion and marketing (Hall, 1995, 1998). According to Hall (1998: 80), "governments provide basic infrastructure such as roads, buses, airports, railways, and sewage as well as own and operate tourist ventures including
hotels and travel companies" and these are the functions of an entrepreneur in the tourism industry. Hall (1998) also gives Qantas as an example of the Australian government's entrepreneurship in the travel industry. Similarly, the Australian government has recently launched a 'Capital shuttle' flight from Sydney to Canberra (the Sunday Telegraph, 6 October 2002). As stated previously, historically, Australian governments at all levels have had a long history of involvement in promoting tourism through bureaus and marketing ventures. In addition, Hall (1998: 81) states that this entrepreneurial function is now extended "to lending of money to private industry for specific tourism related developments".

The role of the Australian government as an entrepreneur in tourist development is closely related to the concept of the 'devalorisation of capital' (Hall, 1995, 1998). Damette (1980 cited in Hall, 1995: 87) defines 'devalorisation of capital' as "the process by which the state government subsidises part of the cost of production, for instance by assisting in the provision of infrastructure or by investing in a tourism project where private venture capital is otherwise unavailable". The offer of government assistance for infrastructure development (e.g., transport networks, phone lines, and roads) is often used to encourage private investment in a particular region or tourist project (Hall, 1995, 1998).

In terms of government promotion of tourism through tourism marketing campaigns, for example, the Australian government includes not only Commonwealth and State government agencies but also regional and capital city tourist authorities such as The Australian Hotels Association, The Federation of Travel Agents, The Tourism Council of Australia, Tourism Training Australia, and The Tourism Task Force (Ascher, 1982; Hall, 1995, 1998; Nankervis, 2000). Further, Hall (1998) considers that tourist commissions and agencies have the task of identifying potential target markets; identifying the best
methods of attracting tourists; directing tourists to purchasing outlets as well as encouraging visits by foreign travellers; and retaining as many domestic tourists as possible.

In recent years Jeffries (1989 cited in Hall, 1995, 1998) noted that there have been increasing demands from government and economic rationalists for greater self-sufficiency by the industry in tourism marketing and promotions. The political implications of such an approach for the tourism industry are substantial (Hall, 1995, 1998). As Hughes (1984: 14) noted:

"the advocates of a free enterprise economy would look to consumer freedom of choice and not to governments to promote firms; the consumer ought to be sovereign in decisions relating to the allocation of the nation’s resources".

In addition, tourism may suit the political needs of a government because it can give the appearance of producing results from policy initiatives in a short period of time (Hall, 1994a; Hall, 1995, 1998).

Government's involvement in the tourism industry cannot achieve all of its objectives without the government working closely with the private sector (Litteljohn, 1997); for example, ensuring that a destination provides quality accommodation is influenced by more than having an accommodation and grading scheme (control mechanism), but also by ensuring that there is the right type of support for businesses that want to train and retain their staff (cooperation and partnership approaches). In many developed countries, for example, governments are keen to 'extract' themselves from a host of tourism 'assets' including ecotourism franchises, hotels, and airports and even national airlines – e.g. Qantas public float, British Airways – (Nankervis, 2000).
The result of such divestiture may include greater competition, cheaper rates for tourists, and a healthier government ledger, but they will also be likely to create increasing turmoil in the industry, a host of new alliances between stakeholders and escalating pressures and threats to the entire tourism industry (Selin, 1993; Gunn, 1994 cited in Nankervis, 2000). In addition to government’s roles in boosting the tourism industry, the private sector could provide significant support to the industry. The amount and form of tourism investment has emerged as one of the major policy concerns surrounding Australia tourism in recent years (Hall, 1995, 1998). A substantial increase in levels of private sector investment has been one of the keys to the development of the Australian tourism industry, particularly in the provision of tourist facilities (Hall, 1995, 1998).

Private sector investment appears vital to meeting the challenge of conserving natural and man-made tourism icons and providing for the needs of the burgeoning sector. For example, in Australia there are $600 billion in private funds invested in the tourism industry and this is likely to have a significant direct impact on infrastructure for regional Australia and for the Australian tourism industry (the Sunday Telegraph 5 May 2002). If this happens, it appears there could be even greater private sector involvement and the industry needs to ensure such investment remains profitable in the future. If it is profitable, it will also be attractive.

However, whilst there appears to be a general consensus that the tourism industry is economically significant in both national and international arenas, both governments and the private sector play an important role in developing the tourism sector (Dwyer, Findlay and Forsyth, 1990 cited in Hall, 1995). The House of Representatives Select Committee on Tourism (1978 cited in Hall, 1995) and Nankervis (2000) have questioned the divergence in the statistics used to measure such tourism development due to deficiencies in the data collection systems, including different measures in different
countries and the overall difficulties of intra-sectoral classification of tourism agencies. Nankervis (2000: 6 – 7) gives as an example of intra-sectoral classification hotel properties classified globally by a range of domestic authorities (e.g., automobile associations) and international agencies (e.g., Michelin guides) using different criteria, but usually on the basis of physical facilities rather than service standards.

Furthermore, Hall (1995, 1998) and Nankervis (2000) raise doubts about the statistical measurements made of tourism development because of the lack of information about many tourism and hospitality operations, particularly in sectors other than accommodation (e.g., attractions, duty free stores, restaurants and transport); difficulties in defining what operations should be classified as belonging to the ‘tourism industry’; different criteria to classify hotel properties; difficulties quantifying the social significance of the industry; and no clear direction in tourism research. Nankervis (2000: 6) explains further that “whist there appears to be a general consensus that the tourism industry is of economic significance, there is also considerable divergence in the statistics used to measure this”.

Tourism and hospitality research arguably has led to the global explosion of qualified researchers and research centres focusing on the tourism and hospitality industry (e.g., Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education or CAUTH in Australia, The International Federation of Information Technology in Travel and Tourism or IFITT in Europe, Council for Hospitality Management Education or CHME in Europe, The Tourism Research Committee of the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism or ASCOT in Australia, Australian National Tourism Research Conferences or ANTRC in Australia, International Conferences on Tourism on Tourism Asia Pacific or ICTT Asia Pacific).
However, this has increased the psychological and even physical distance between research producers and research consumers (Weiler, 2001). Tourism research is no longer atheoretical (Jafari, 1990) but with theory and academic legitimacy comes a price, viz., “alienation of the industry” Weiler (2001: 85). There are now regular tourism research conferences (e.g. CAUTHE in Australia, The IFITT in Europe, CHME in Europe, The Tourism Research Committee of the Australian Standing Committee on Tourism or ASCOT in Australia, ANTRC in Australia, ICTT Asia Pacific) which are “attended mostly by academic staff and students, while those in the tourism industry attend separate conferences, with very few academics in attendance and this has created a gap between university based researchers and the tourism industry” (Weiler, 2001: 85). As Smith (1988: 182 cited in Hall, 1998: 4) argues, “although this research explosion has brought intellectual depth and sophistication to the industry, the decision makers and leaders in the industry have come to view the academic community as irrelevant to the industry”. As a consequence, (Weiler, 2001: 85) states, “the volume and sophistication of research publications means that people in the industry may find it increasingly difficult to keep apace with research methods and findings”.

Nankervis (2000) coins the term ‘sporadic’ to describe research into the tourism industry that is functionally focused on a distinct marketing emphasis, but lacks the data necessary for the purposes of tourism planning and development. Lynch and Brown (1999: 74) use the term “excess baggage” to describe theoretical ideas of little value to the practical realities of tourism management. Those who do tourism research appear to limit their focus and lay claim to an area of specialisation in which they may feel confident to undertake and critically evaluate research. Unfortunately, in many cases this has tended to result in a distancing from the reality and increasingly complex realities of the tourism industry. Jafari and Ritchie (1981 cited in Hall, 1998: 4) state, “in contrast to
most disciplines where teaching and research are intimately related, tourism education and tourism research appear to have developed and be developing largely independent of each other”. Similarly, like their counterparts in industry and government, “researchers seem to fear of the unknown, and unless being forced to do so they will often stay within their comfort zone of the ‘ivory tower’ and specialist tourism research conferences and events” (Weiler, 2001: 85). In addition, despite the Australian government’s awareness of the importance of tourism, the Government spends little money on research and development in the industry (the SMH, 3 September 2002). Joe Hockey – the Minister for Small Business and Tourism – (cited in the SMH, 3 September 2002: 1) stated, “despite being Australia’s fourth biggest export earner and biggest services export, the Government has spent only $5 million on research and development”.

Having regular conferences and/or seminars that are multi-disciplinary, such as economics, geography and marketing approaches that integrate concepts and ideas relevant to tourism research, and spend more money on research and development could minimise the gap between university based researchers and the tourism industry.

Regardless of the deficiencies in the methods of data collection and data processing, the variety of instruments used to forecast tourism growth, and the various ways of classifying hotels, industry-based research could be used to confirm the assertions often made in more academic literature and research publications (Nankervis, 2000).

The Bureau of Tourism Research (BTR) in Australia has developed a national Framework for the Collection and Publication of Tourism Statistics, international tourism agencies (e.g., World Travel and Tourism Council, World Travel Organisation, International Air Transport Association, Pacific Asia Travel Association, Travel and Tourism Intelligence, United Nations and World Tourism Organisation, etc) are also
building up their data bases to better forecast tourism growth. However, the result remains questionable (Elliott, 1997; Fleetwood, 1993 and Sorrensen, 1997 cited in Nankervis, 2000; Todd, 2001; Frechtling, 2001) and due to a lack of "a plausible data" (Go and Pine, 1995: 24 cited in Nankervis, 2000: 9); as a consequence it is subject to potential bias and misinterpretations.

To date it seems that even "the definitions of aspects of the tourism industry necessary for research are overwhelmed with complications" (The Australian House of Representative Select Committee on Tourism cited in Hall, 1998: 5). For example, in generic terms, a tourist can be defined as a group of people who visit 'strange nations' to have fun, relax and become acquainted with other people who have similar interests in doing so for a short period (Burkart and Medlik, 1974 cited in Hall, 1998: 6; Formica, 2002). Quite similarly, Hall (1998: 5) states, "tourism is the temporary, short-term travel of non residents along transit routes to and from a destination". Elliott (1997: 21) quotes the WTO definition of tourism as "the activity of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their environment for not more than one consecutive year, either for leisure, business and other purposes". Leiper (1999) gave examples of what can constitute a tourist as follows:

- a group of holidaymakers on package tours;

- travellers visiting relatives and friends in a short-term;

- independent travellers such as business travellers, conference and convention delegates, international students, and pilgrims.
Whilst such definitions are all embracing, however, it appears they provide only limited assistance to tourism managers and authorities in the development of their industry (Nankervis, 2000).

The development of tourism has always fluctuated with general trends pointing steadily upwards (Muller, 2001). For example, not only has the new consumer emerged, but society as a whole has become ever more fragmented (Muller, 2001) and political boundaries are being abolished (Nankervis, 2000; Muller, 2001). Specific industry politics include conflicts between sectors, strategic alliances and the various relationships between tourism sectors, agencies and the public sector (Go and Pine, 1995; Elliott, 1997). Above all, political differences between neighbouring nations due to diverse levels of tourism development of different ideologies and the ‘reluctance’ of national governments to relinquish their powers to a multinational organisation (Gee and Fayos-Sola, 1998 cited in Nankervis, 2000) often preclude regional or international collaboration in tourism planning. In addition, the demand by tourists for quality, value for money, and variety in a safe and welcoming environment (Mazitelli, 1999) sometimes receives ‘an unwelcoming response’ from the host nation due to cultural sensitivity and political tensions. As recent illustrations of this, the ‘failure’ of the Howard government to tackle the issue of Hanson-mania caused Australia’s reputation as a multicultural country to fade particularly in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia (the Hotel Online News, 2000). Past political tension between Indonesia and Australia over East Timor has resulted in a political barrier which downgrades the countries’ relationship and has had an impact on tourism development and cultural exchanges. The border tension between Thailand and Burma (the SMH, 17 July 2002) has escalated, the US war plan against Iraq (Time magazine, 23 September 2002) may be implemented, and the recent bomb blast in Bali (the SMH, 14 October 2002) could destabilise the region forcing tourists out.
However, despite political differences, the number of Indonesian tourist arrivals into Australia and vice versa appears to continue to grow (the Jakarta Post, 2 September 2002). In fact both countries are very well positioned geographically to attract international visitors. In addition, in spite of such political difficulties, the economic side of tourism development has encouraged an increase in government spending on tourism programs (Gunn, 1994; Elliott, 1997). As a result of government involvement, the number of jobs created by the tourism industry will also continue to expand and as a consequence, the increase in the tourism industry is also expected to attract new investment (Gunn, 1994; Elliott, 1997; Mazitelli, 1999).

3. THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The tourism industry is mainly comprised of three sectors: 1) hospitality, 2) travel or transportation, and 3) visitor services (Elliott, 1997; Sorensen, 1997; Tribe, 1997; Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge, 1998). In addition, the tourism industry comprises a combination of direct service providers, regulators and intermediaries such as travel agents, corporate travel companies, private agents, and student associations (Elliott, 1997; Sorensen, 1997; Pearce et al., 1998). According to Nankervis (2000) it appears symbiotic and disparate in nature and structure.

There is much literature (e.g., Lashley, 2000; Read, 2001; Baker and Huyton, 2001; Graham, 2001; Cetron, 2001; Muller, 2001) on the tourism and hospitality industry that focuses on one or the other of its constituent sectors (e.g., hospitality, transportation, food and beverage, hotels' operations, hotels' characteristics, history of hospitality management, government regulation, hospitality agencies, hospitality management school, etc) or on the relative contributions of public and private sector agencies, or on the micro-aspects of the industry (e.g., specific hotels, airlines, or destinations).
However, fewer publications embrace the entire industry in any degree of depth, and many of these tend to description rather than analysis (Medlik, 1991; Bull, 1995; Pearce et al., 1998; Sorensen, 1997; Tribe, 1997). Of all the sectors of the tourism industry, the hospitality sector is arguably the most researched (Nankervis, 2000).

According to Ingram (1999: 140) the word ‘hospitality’ can generate “rich mental images depending on whether you are a recipient or a provider of its services”. The Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1993 cited in Ingram, 1999: 140) defines hospitality as “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers”. Furthermore Ingram (1999) considered further that receivers of hospitality might imagine friendly social occasions enhanced by good food and drink and the warmth of the welcome. Arguably, too, hospitality has a proud ‘tradition’ but it needs to develop its practices, theories and education for what promises to offer a flourishing future in the new millennium (Ingram, 1999).

For some people the essence of hospitality is the provision of food, refreshments and accommodation for those who are away from home. New transport technology has opened up travel for business and pleasure to a mass market and has increased the need for accommodation and food away from home. Hotels, therefore, be described according to the criteria of location (city centre, resort, roadside), trade (commercial, leisure, holiday), and standard (luxury, budget, downscale).

The hospitality industry is often referred to as a ‘people’ industry in that it is characterised by labour intensity (Nankervis, 2000) and because of its reliance on service rather than product differentiation for competitive advantage (Adam and Maxwell, 1995). The hospitality industry is ‘fragmented’ (Nankervis, 2000) and ‘heterogeneous’ (Ingram, 1999). For example: “in the UK the hospitality industry is being largely made up
of small firms: 81 per cent of hotels and 94 per cent of restaurants and bars have fewer than 25 associates" (Department of National Heritage, 1996 cited in Ingram, 1999: 141). Brander-Brown and Harris (1995) argue that the hospitality industry has experienced significant paradigm shifts over the past decades. It was described as an entrepreneurial industry that was highly individualistic and fragmentary, but in this century the industry is seen as complex, multinational and multidivisional. Knowles (1994), Hall (1995, 1998) and Nankervis (2002) suggest that the scope of the hospitality industry is difficult to define, perhaps because of the lack of a conclusive definition of hospitality operators; for example, the guest house and bed and breakfast sector is a dynamic one in which operators may choose to sell spare rooms according to season and personal convenience, but often this is not included in the definition of hospitality operations.

The absence of a clear classification framework is reflected in the nature of the hospitality product, which is a complex amalgam of components, some of which are difficult to identify and specify (Ingram, 1999). Because the hospitality product appears to be complex to define, Buttle (1986 cited in Ingram 1999: 141) defines the hospitality product as "a set of those satisfactions and dissatisfactions which make up the hospitality experience". To maintain guests’ satisfaction index of outstanding service and reduce disappointment record, Melia (1992) argues that the hospitality industry relies on its day-to-day operations of how to provide service quality. However, Mullins (1992) contends that hospitality operations combine a product and service element and that the service element very often causes most problems in delivering outstanding customer service. Mullins (1992), Ingram (1999) and Hogan (2001) said that these problems seem to arise in the interpersonal relationships that characterise service which affects customers’ perceptions of quality and value. Ingram (1999) coins the term ‘subjective frame of reference’ which means that service quality is the personal experience of
individual customers. Further, Ingram (1999) gives the example in the hospitality operations of staff being frustrated by dealing with unjustified customer complaints because of the consumer's view of quality. Although facilities may be identified according to established star rating criteria (Nankervis, 2000), customer satisfaction is a function of the match between perceived expectations and actual provision (Melia, 1992; Ingram, 1999).

These arguments tend to reinforces the view that the hospitality product is usually imperfectly understood and this has an impact on front line associates who attempt to consistently achieve customer satisfaction. 'The practice of hospitality' in the hospitality industry, in part, can be determined by the characteristics of the service and its delivery system that impact on individual customer's experiences.

Ingram (1999) argues that as 'the practice of hospitality' (e.g., customer processing operations, information processing operations and product processing operations) became more widespread and professional, so it sought to acquire a knowledge base through which it could improve its operations and develop managers for the future.

Ingram's concept of 'the practice of hospitality' is expanded by Dittmer (2002: 292) to include 'operations management' which is defined as "the day-to-day activities that the hospitality industry managers engage in to achieve the goals of operations they manage such as marketing, accounting, financing, and human resource management". Inevitably the debate arose as to whether 'the practice of hospitality' could be differentiated from other services (Ingram, 1999). Leavitt (2001) argues that 'the production line' approach (e.g., fast food operations which cater for specific market segments and offer a standard service delivery system) could be applied to any business operation. Leavitt's argument, supported by Dittmer (2002) is that 'the production line' approach can be used to other
service operations such as food and beverage (e.g., food and service preferences of customers, prices acceptable to customers, skills required), services (e.g., food preparation in the kitchen, staff friendliness, valet parking), ambience (e.g., lighting, uniforms, furnishings, decorations), and lodging operations (e.g., specific rooms, suites),

It can be said that the idea of ‘the practice of hospitality’, ‘operation management’, and ‘the production line’ approaches in the hospitality industry typically deal with service to customers regardless of what kind of services the industry offers. Dittmer (2002: 13) states that “the quality of service is critical to the success and survival of a hospitality business”. In order to provide the quality of service, thus the ability of the hospitality industry managers to organise tasks, structure, people, and technology is important (Walsh, 2000).

Management organisations can play a central role in co-ordinating organisational tasks, structure, people and technology (Walsh, 2000). Some writers observe that hospitality managers differ from their counterparts in other non-service industries (Adam and Maxwell, 1995; Brander-Brown and Harris, 1995). Venison (1983), for example, remarks that hotel managers need to be at the ‘front of house’ in order to communicate with staff and customers, to check standards of service and to take corrective action to remedy problems as they occur. Shaner (1978) investigated the nature of hospitality managers in the US and in his study concluded that staffs expect their managers to be honest and to have a ‘superior capability’ to manage the company professionally. In support of Shaner’s study, Kriegl (2000) added that managers also need interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, flexible and adaptive leadership skills. Stone’s (1988 cited in Ingram, 1999) research found that hotel managers tend to be calm, realistic, assertive, competitive, cheerful, bold, independent, cynical, practical and have a lower scholastic and mental capacity than other managers. Worsfold (1989) reinforced Stone’s study and
adds that they are more assertive, more venturesome and imaginative than other managers. These studies suggest that hospitality management is a ‘unique activity’ which requires a special set of attributes and specific training.

On the other hand, hospitality operations concern the way that organisations deliver their product and/or service to the consumer (Melia, 1992; Jones, 1996; Hogan, 2001) and this is a key concern for the effective practice of hospitality. Many hospitality firms, however, seem make their operations more complex in an attempt to please as many customers as possible, but often their quality standards suffer as a result. To maintain quality standards, Thompson (1967 cited in Ingram, 1999) suggests that an ideal operation is one in which a single product is produced at a continuous rate and as if inputs flowed continuously at a steady rate and with specified quality. This ideal has been reflected in the trend towards specialisms in food concepts (e.g., fast food, ethnic), which cater for specific market segments and offer a standard service delivery system (Ingram, 1999).

Nankervis (2000) raised the issue of the lack of a universal classification for hotel systems and Ingram (1996, 1999) has put effort into developing a grading system for different hotels including smaller hotels, guesthouses, cottages, and villas which are not included in the star and/or diamond rating systems. Nobles (1999) argues that most hotel systems are based upon the tangible aspects of hotels (e.g., hotel physical facilities, restaurants, guest rooms, gyms, saunas, sports, technology, 24 hrs room service) and this system appears to fail to capture ‘service quality criteria’. Several authors (e.g., Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, 1990; Callan, 1996; Nobles, 1999) have proposed frameworks and criteria for evaluating and rating service quality, but Nankervis (2000) argues that the framework and criteria developed fails to amalgamate into a standard hotel classification systems. It may be the case that different customers’
perceptions of quality are very important and that most classifications tend to ignore the importance of the intangibles which influence this perception (Zeithaml et al., 1990). These arguably can be quite important to developing the ratings system. Thus, it can be seen under the current system of categorisation that a five ‘star’ or ‘diamond’ hotel is graded according to its physical facilities and could claim superior or excellent service by association whether it can be justified or not (Nankervis, 2000).

Due to the complexity of the hotel environment, the use of new technology is imperative. Information technology (IT) is altering drastically the competitive landscape of the hospitality industry and changing how companies conduct business and reach their customers (Connolly and Olsen, 2001; Sheldon, 2002). Information technology (IT) can support hotel operation in the area of work efficiencies by reducing operational costs and improving productivity (Connolly and Olsen, 2001). IT also opens new avenues in marketing and sales (e.g., direct sales, interactive TV travel shops or transactions and one to one marketing via the Internet; see Affolter, 2001). In addition, a high degree of IT know-how can assure the competitive edge over the competition and enhance a firm’s success (Affolter, 2001; Sheldon, 2002). Moreover, the dramatic development in the IT field has also had its impact on the travel industry and is a major motivator of competition (Affolter, 2001). The Internet provides not only the opportunity for cheaper and more accessible tourism planning and booking, but also for ‘virtual tourism’ (Dworetzky, 1997 cited in Nankervis, 2000; Sheldon, 2002). IT supplies comprehensive information on hotels, airlines, connected airlines, airlines destinations, time departure and arrival and quick and easy access to a tour operator’s products (Affolter, 2001). For example, RAFFLES International has launched a new website for its luxury Raffles tier hotel which offers online reservations, highlights special promotions and has links to mini sites on all 35 Raffles International hotels and resorts including flight schedules and
online ticketing (the Sun Herald, 25 August 2002). To that end, hotel companies need to continually update their guest databases and use every customer interaction point as a knowledge – building opportunity. The travel industry also receives benefits as a result of implementing advanced IT (the Sun Herald, 15 September 2002). For example, TRAVEL Indochina now has a dedicated website for independent holidays to Asia’s most popular destinations which has all the information a budget traveller needs to design a holiday, offering a menu of different options, flights, destinations and accommodation combinations (the Sun Herald, 15 September 2002).

However, despite the sophistication of the Internet, it quite often does not supply related relevant information. For example, the Qantas website, Virgin Blue dot com, and Kendal websites do not supply or link to an accommodation website which may be important for customers who need to make a booking. Similarly certain hotel websites fail to supply information on local and international airlines. Even though such technology can change the way people plan travel, buy tickets and make reservations (The Press Wire Report, 1999) if the same technology cannot supply additional information, then technology only plays a partial role in influencing travellers’ behaviours.

Nevertheless, the development of the airline Global Distribution Systems (GDS) - Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, World span - has allowed a one-stop-shop facility in booking airlines, accommodation and car rental services (Litteljohn, 1997). However, access to the system was designed for industry intermediaries and is only recently being made more available and accessible. This technology has been developed by a number of hotel companies in partnership in order to allow consumers and trade intermediaries a single point to access details on a wide number of hotels, in a very full and clear way. As a result of rapidly using technology most resorts, conferences centres, air charter
services and other transportation providers are finding it increasingly easy to market themselves directly to consumers (Cetron, 2001).

On the Internet, consumers have access hotel groups and individual units and, potentially, to avoid the commission element of an intermediary-made booking. For example, the global hotel chain ‘Radisson Hotels and Resorts’ has launched an online booking service for all its 23 hotels across the Asia-Pacific, which allows cyber travellers to book directly via the individual hotel pages, thus enjoying some exclusive online deals (the Sun Herald, 26 May 2002), a shared hotel reservations systems, web ticketing and interactive travel planning, access to flight schedules (The Press Wire Report, 2002), and this encourages collaboration and ongoing alliances or strategic partnering between hotels, and between hotels and airlines (e.g., WordRes and Wizcom; The Thomas Cook Group Ltd with the American Automobile Association; Hotel Online Hospitality News cited in Crotts et al., 2000). Recently ‘Tourism Whistler’ has launched Whistler’s official website with a new, more intuitive internet experience for prospective visitors which contains information on accommodation, activities, events, packages, key dates, maps, weather, news and business directories (the Sun Herald, 30 June 2002). The Internet changes the way customers purchase goods and services (Cetron, 2001). The potential of the Internet and associated co-operative sites could allow the large number of small businesses throughout the world to compete for market share on an even footing with industry leaders (Connolly and Olsen, 2001; Cetron, 2001; Sheldon, 2002).

Understanding the importance of delivering customer service, knowing the hospitality product, having a universal hotel classification system and using technology in the hotel industry does not automatically lead to increased occupancy rates. Regional economic downturns and negative foreign media reports (as discussed earlier), for example, have left many hotel rooms in Australia empty and leaving the tourism industry’s future
uncertain (the Bernama, 30 December 1998). For example: in Australia (in Sydney particularly), the downturn in Sydney's hotel market has led to the closure of five top hotels since the Olympic Games with seven more expected to follow next year (the SMH, 12 November 2001). The closure of some hotels in Sydney is argued by Hockey to be appropriate (the SMH, 3 September 2002). He states, "tourist accommodation, particularly in five star hotels is running at 40 per cent below capacity" (the SMH, 3 September 2002: 1). While the events of September 11 have contributed to the slump, hotels are suffering the effects of the collapse of Ansett and an oversupply of hotel rooms. According to the Australian Hotels Association report (cited in the SMH, 12 November, 2001), occupancy rates at this time of year should be close to 90 per cent but are hovering at 50 per cent. As a consequence, casual labour has been affected and some hotels may have to consider redundancies and these may reach 20 per cent of the industry's workforce. The Tourism Task Force (2001 cited in the SMH 12 November 2001) has labelled the closure of hotel rooms in Sydney as 'the day the firestorm started' and according to The Jones Lang Lasalle Hotels Group calculations (cited in the SMH 12 November, 2001) 453 rooms have been removed from the Sydney market and the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau reported that the conference industry in Sydney and worldwide was bracing itself for a slump. Table 1 shows the number of hotel rooms closed as the tourist slump affected Sydney.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotels</th>
<th>No. Rooms</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sebel Townhouse</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chateau</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oct 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of the Town</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Mar 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Seasons on Crown</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Jun 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebel Parramatta</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nov 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rooms</td>
<td>627</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Australian Hotel Association (cited in the SMH, 12 November 2001:3).
There has been a recent general sluggishness in the hotel sector in Sydney. While the premium owners believe there will be a turn around in tourist numbers, it is the sluggishness of the business traveller market that is taking its toll and resulting in closure of some hotels (Australian Hotel Association report cited in the SMH, 13 May 2002). Overall occupancy rates last year were below 70% for the first time in a decade. The Property Council’s latest hotel valuation index shows the total return for a generic four star hotel fell to 0.88% over the 12 months to the end of the September quarter (the SMH, 13 May 2002). The chair of the Property Council’s tourism committee, Philip Levinson, attributed the falls to oversupply, particularly of four-star accommodation, coupled with the collapse of Ansett, and the September 11 terrorist attacks (the SMH, 13 May 2002). The larger listed hotel owners and operators such as Mirvac, General Property Trust, Grand Hotel Group, Thakral and Peppers Hotel Trust are all feeling the slowdown in the sector (the SMH, 13 May 2002).

In the hospitality industry, the transportation sector can also play a significant role in increasing hotel tenancy which can help to transport tourists from the airport to their destination and vice versa. The transportation sector seems complex in structure (Nankervis, 2000) and has strong government controls mainly because it involves the public community service. In addition, the roles of governments in public transport are largely in the provision of airlines, railways, buses, maritime transportation system, and ferries. In conjunction with their roles in the public sector, governments also maintain tourism infrastructure (e.g. roads, water, electricity and telephone line); formulate tourism policies and plans; communicate with other countries (e.g., visa free for a week visit, visa on arrival, passport control, customs, quarantine); maintain the industry standards (e.g., food handling, occupational health and safety, safety aviation); and promote tourism (e.g., via information booth, internet café, free brochures). Furthermore, the Australian
governments’ plan to expand public transport in rural and inner suburbs in conjunction with the private sector can benefit the tourism and hospitality sector. For example, ‘See Australia’, ‘Food and Wine festivals’, ‘Explore the Trail with Country Link’ are some of the federal government’s programs to attract local tourists to spend their leisure time in the region. Thus, the availability of convenient transportation combined with government involvement can boost tourism business and also the hotel occupancy rate.

However, the transportation sector (e.g. air transport, sea transport and road transport) is showing signs of capacity constraints, especially in Europe (Todd, 2001). In addition, Todd (2001) considers that while it may be possible to achieve the same level of flight intensity within Europe’s air traffic control system as has already been achieved in the USA, the supply of airport facilities may prove much harder to expand. In Australia, as discussed previously, air transport has also faced capacity limitations. In Australia, Sydney airport also has capacity constraints such as environmental constraints (e.g., noise problems and pollution) and political constraints (e.g., in the past, the NSW government was planning to build the second airport at Bankstown, but this has not eventuated). Furthermore, Virgin Blue has failed to acquire the former Ansett terminal leaving passengers queuing outside the existing terminal, and causing delays to check in (the SMH, 23 July 2002). Internationally, after the September 11th, major European airlines are cutting flights to the US (the Sunday Telegraph, 4 August 2002); for example, British Airways has cancelled its routine flight from London to New York and Washington, Air France has cancelled flights from Paris to New York, and Scandinavian Airlines has also cancelled its schedule to some capital cities across the US (the Sunday Telegraph, 4 August 2002). Recently, following the bomb blast in Bali, Qantas, Air New Zealand, and Singapore Airlines have reduced their flights to the region (the Herald Sun,
15 October 2002), and Air Paradise (Bali’s first international airline) delayed plans to begin services (the Herald Sun, 15 October 2002).

Of necessity, it is now the time for governments to address the limitations facing the transportation sector by expanding the supply of tourism infrastructure to accommodate the mounting demands for better facilities and conditions. For example: the Australian government is launching Australian Airlines – Qantas’s international leisure carrier – (the SMH, 16 September 2002), and Capital Shuttle (the Sunday telegraph, 6 October 2002). The NSW government spent $12 million on upgrading rail signalling in the Sydney train system (the SMH, 10 September 2002), and invested $20 million in ‘virtual reality’ technology for railway workers (the Sunday Telegraph, 15 September 2002). All these actions are expected to assist Australia’s tourism business. The Indonesian government was about to launch its new carrier called Air Paradise International which will operate non-stop services between Denpasar and Melbourne (the Herald Sun, 16 September 2002). This may assist the government to attract more tourists to visit Bali and possibly other local destinations. However, as mentioned earlier, following the bomb explosion in Bali, the Indonesia government has cancelled its plan to launch (the SMH, 14 October 2002 and the Herald Sun, 15 October 2002) and this could affect local tourist destinations as well as regional tourist destinations.

Travel agencies can also contribute to the tourism and hotel sector, where they act as ‘selling agents’ (Bull, 1995). Travel agencies can be independent, part of a larger chain and they may be generalist or more specialised (e.g., domestic, or international or both). In addition, travel agencies can act as a mediator between tourist attractions (including tourists destinations) and accommodation (hotels, apartments and villa). All these assist travellers in finding a better place to stay and obtaining tourism events information.
However, the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, sometimes appears to act as a direct agent; for example, a marketing department attempts to attract more travellers to stay and one way of doing this is by providing a program package and whoever makes advanced booking gets a cheaper rate. This can be a threat for travel agencies because they cannot compete with the hotel for price. Most hotels in Sydney (e.g. Starwood hotel chain) have set up a communication department which only deals with online booking customers.

Even though travel agencies are accredited by major airlines and have been eligible in Australia since 1992 for accreditation by the Australian Travel Agents Qualification Program (French et al, 1995 cited in Nankervis, 2000), they are arguably threatened as a result of the strategic alliances between hotels and airlines incorporating direct bookings and ticketings. In response to this threat, travel agencies have merged and formed their own strategic alliances with hotel chains and/or airlines (Nankervis, 2000).

In summary then, the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, is complex in nature and structure and appears to be undergoing significant change, particularly in relation to simplifying the structure to provide excellent service to customers. The information age and globalisation continue to drive change in the way the consumer of tomorrow will do business with companies in the hotel industry. This consumer seeks for intangible experiences as well as physical capabilities as provided by the hotel sector.

The implementation of new technologies requires substantial know-how and competence in IT technology and the skill to combine these new technologies with the requirements and mechanics of the travel business as well as with the changing
consumer behaviour. Therefore, the hospitality industry needs to provide adequate training to give extra value, convenience and friendly service to customers.

Evan (2002: 16) states that “increasing global competition, ‘the war’ for recruiting talented associates, and a tightening economy have brought organisations a more focused approach to training and development”. Indeed, Chambers (2002: 32) states that “although technology is both replicable and portable across international boundaries, a skilled workforce is the key to competitive advantage in the marketplace and training is one of several tools to supply a skilled workforce”; for example, in the transportation sector, many airlines’ staff are now not just trained to deal with ‘unacceptable behaviours’ (e.g., intoxicated passengers, refused to fasten seatbelts), but also trained to deal with ‘midair medical crises’ (e.g., provide first assistance for passengers who have heart attack and inform the pilot to land the aircraft to the closer airport, breath problem or any other health problems; the Sun Herald, 21 July 2002). In Australia, ‘virtual reality’ technology is used to train railway workers to drive trains and handle emergencies (the Sunday Telegraph, 15 September 2002). The purpose of training staff using ‘virtual reality’ technology is to ensure that staff know how to handle a variety of ‘real life’ events such as rescuing a passenger on the tracks to avoid a serious derailment (the Sunday Telegraph, 15 September 2002).

In the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, associates are required to possess the appropriate skills in order to build a value chain serving both internal customers such as other associates, and external customers such as consumers (Christou and Eaton, 2000); for example, in the hotel sector in Sydney (e.g., Hilton hotel) provides ‘a specific training’ (e.g., language training and interpersonal skills training) designed for its associates and they are expected to be able to communicate in more than one language to serve customers from dissimilar cultural backgrounds (Hilton
magazine, 2000). Wagen (1999 cited in Ramirez and Hartel, 2001: 5) supported this ‘specific training’ by saying “the need to have certain skills such as being able to communicate in different languages, is essential in the hotel sector”.

As previously stated in the new millennium, the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly the hotel sector, is faced with significant challenges to its success in a globalised system and a ‘free market’. In order to successfully compete in the global market, the industry needs to put effort into skilling associates via training, which plays a vital role in maintaining customer service. The importance of training front line associates is because they make contact with customers on a daily basis (Melia, 1992). These associates can have a tremendous impact on customers’ perceptions of service quality and on customer satisfaction (Herman and Eller, 1991; Laurie, 1998). Having said this, therefore, attention needs to be paid to conducting training programs for associates to produce a skilled workforce which renders a friendly service and keeps the industry competitive and profitable (Melia, 1992; Laurie, 1998).

It can be argued that training needs to be undertaken to achieve an organisations ‘bottom lines’, thus training activities need to be in line with an organisation’s business objectives (Nankervis, Compton and McCarthy, 1999; Nankervis, Compton and Baird, 2002). Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a key role in training and continual development (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002) and this in turn has an affect on the associate’s commitment to the company. It is through HRM that training evaluations can be used to tie training objectives to organisational objectives.

According to Delery (1998: 289) "HRM practices have been linked with turnover, productivity, financial returns and firm value". This growing area of research has been labelled strategic human resource management (SHRM) in that it emphasizes the
strategic role of human resources management in meeting business objectives (Delery, 1998). Wright and McMahen (1992: 298) defined strategic human resource management (SHRM) as "the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable the firm to achieve its goals". From this point of view, it is thus imperative to discuss how HRM practices are linked with organisational effectiveness and the following section highlights the importance of HRM in the hotel sector.

4. Human Resource Management (HRM) in the Hotel Sector

According to Nankervis et al (1999: 4) "early employee specialists were called personnel managers (or personnel administrators) and their main tasks are comprised of a set of activities such as recruitment, selection, training, salary administration and industrial relations". Kelliher and Johnson (1987 cited in Worsfold, 1999), in their original survey of all UK hotels found that in small hotels the responsibility of personnel management was to recruit and select staff, whereas in larger hotels the situation was expanded to also include wider responsibilities, such as using written contracts, disciplinary procedures and equal opportunity policies.

There has been considerable debate as to whether HRM differs significantly from personnel management (Worsfold: 1999). As Nankervis et al. (1999: 4 - 5) argue personnel management activities (e.g., recruitment, selection, training, salary administration, and industrial relations) are "often performed effectively but with little relationship between the various activities, or with overall organisational objectives".

More recently, the concept of HRM has influenced professional practice which assumes that all personnel management activities are integrated with each other, and strategically with organisational objectives (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002). Nankervis
et al. (2002) argue that, in essence, HRM differs from earlier personnel management activities in relation to its focus, its principles, and its applications. Thus, as Nankervis et al (2002: 14) argue “the focus of HRM today is on the effective overall management of an organisation’s workforce in order to contribute to the achievement of desired objectives and goals, thus, all HR functions (e.g., recruitment, HRD, performance appraisal, and remuneration) are seen to be integrated components of overall HRM strategies”.

In a survey of UK hotels by Price (1994), a strong correlation was found between the size of hotels and the HRM practices. Price (1994) noted that the majority of the examples of ‘good’ HR practice were found amongst relatively large employers, and that these employers were clearly improving their HRM practices as well as recognising the need for management training. In addition, Price (1994) considered that employment practices in smaller establishments, however, were very informal with many owners and managers seeing little need for formal arrangements for management training. A follow up study by Kelliher and Johnson (1997) which focused on larger hotels, records the changes that have occurred over a ten year interval. They report that the HR function in hotels has expanded, but that there is little evidence of innovation or of a move towards a model of Strategic HRM. In a more recent survey of larger hotels, Hoque (1999) presents a question that is rarely addressed; viz, whether the move to HRM in the hotel and catering industry can be identified as ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ versions. Furthermore, Hoque (1999) argued that it would be reasonable to assume that sectors such as the fast food industry would adopt a ‘hard’ version with its emphasis on control, whereas in a luxury hotel the ‘soft’ version of HRM with its emphasis on commitment, motivation, team work and managerial as well as supervisory support might be considered appropriate.
Compton and Morrissey (2002: 2) state that “much has been written about the choice to be made between ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ HRM”. Furthermore, they argue that HRM is said “to incorporate both perspectives; the ‘hard’ aspects have a strategic and managerial focus emphasising the effective utilisation of human resources towards broad organisational objectives and focus on issues to do with strategy formulation, human resource planning, contribution to the ‘bottom line’ and program evaluation, whereas ‘soft strategies focus on issues involving better communication, employee consultation, motivation, empowerment, commitment, and leadership” (p. 2).

However, hotels often adopt both versions to accomplish tasks; for example, in the kitchen where food preparation is always associated with hygiene and healthiness, the head chef very often uses a ‘hard’ approach (e.g., control and command) while at the same time he or she has to use a ‘soft’ approach (e.g., motivation, encouragement) to have his or her team mates perform well.

It appears that ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ HRM approaches can be adopted in certain circumstances in order to accomplish tasks and, to some extent, both approaches seem hard to separate. Regardless of which approach employers adopt, the most important aspect is to integrate the HRM approach with the business strategy.

An important construct of models of HRM is that the components of HRM are integrated with business strategy (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002). However, the research investigating HRM, particularly in small businesses, suggests that there is little attempt to integrate HRM practices with business strategy and the evidence regarding the hotel and catering industry is somewhat contradictory (Worsfold, 1999). Forte and Teare (1990) and Lucas (1995) for example, consider that although there is some evidence of a strategic approach employed by a few larger companies, but that “there is
little evidence to suggest that an explicit strategic approach is used to any extent in the industry" (Fender and Litteljohn, 1992 cited in Worsfold, 1999: 28). Similarly, a survey of hotels in Australia and Singapore by Nankervis and Debrah (1995) notes that there appears to be little evidence in either country that the roles of personnel/human resource specialists in such hotels have moved beyond traditional administrative functions towards more modern strategic practices.

In contrast, Hoque (1999) considers that the hotels within his study approach the management of human resources in a ‘strategic manner’. Hoque, using the 1995 Automobile Association’s UK Hotels (AA) guide as a source, selected 660 hotels for his sample. Questionnaires were distributed to these 660 hotels and 232 were handed back, giving a response rate of 35 per cent. He found that the large hotels claimed to have an HR strategy and that a substantial proportion of respondents claimed that this was integrated with their business strategy. Edgar and Nisbet (1995) go so far as to question the value of strategic management for smaller hospitality businesses. They argue that in an increasingly complex environment long term strategic planning has little relevance or benefit for hospitality organisations and greater emphasis should be placed on facilitating the innovative or creative organisation. It could be argued that ‘hard’ versions of HRM, with an emphasis on managing human resources, may well employ more control systems, which would more easily integrate with strategy, compared to ‘soft’ versions of HRM. A recent study of 130 service companies found that the linking of quality management practices to strategic planning seemed the best predictor of increased productivity and competitive advantage (Terziovski and Dean, 1998). According to Worsfold (1999) the quality management practices include quality culture, in which all members of the organisation have responsibility for quality but also focus on systems and procedures, training, and performance measures of associates. The
measures in this case appear to be related to a ‘hard’ interpretation of HRM emphasising systems and controls with little attempts to have full commitment.

A study of service industries conducted by Patterson, West, Lawthom, and Nickell, (1997 cited in Worsfold, 1999) that focuses on the relationship between HRM practices and service quality found that commitment to deliver service quality resulting from HRM policies is considered to result in greater effort which, in turn, results in improved performance. Pitt, Foreman and Bromfield (1995), in a survey of service contact workers in a large industrial service organisation, were able to demonstrate a moderate relationship between organisational commitment and the delivery of service quality.

It is argued that many companies have equal access to capital and are equally able to benefit themselves with new products and technologies to obtain parity with their competitors. In order to differentiate themselves from their competitors and achieve a competitive advantage they must provide added value (e.g., service quality) to their customers. A number of studies have attempted to examine the link between quality and performance (Groves, Gregoire and Downey, 1995; Powell, 1995). The results from these studies have generally shown that quality improvements can lead to increased productivity, performance and profits. It is self evident, that in terms of service quality the behaviour of the service provider is of paramount importance and customer perceptions of satisfactory service have been shown to be directly influenced by the behaviour of service providers which, in turn, appear to be influenced by HRM (Samenfink, 1994; Sparks, 1994; Mohr and Bither, 1995; Worsfold, 1999). More recently Zerbe, Dopni and Harel (1998) have carried out a study on aircrew to examine the proposition that employee perceptions of HRM predict the behaviour of aircrew towards their customers. The results indicate that service culture has a direct effect on self-
reported service behaviour and that perceptions of HRM had a direct effect on service
culture and thereby an indirect effect on self reported service behaviour.

It can be said that the development of ‘value adding’ skills among employees adds to the
comparative success of a hospitality or tourism firm (Baum, 1995 cited in Christou and
Eaton, 2000; Go, Monachello and Baum, 1996 cited in Christou and Eaton, 2000). To
develop these ‘value adding’ skills the hotel sector needs to put effort into training its
front line associates. Thus the hotel sector has to focus on providing training for its front
line associates in order to “gain inimitable distinctive competencies, which ultimately may
lead to sustainable competitive advantage” (Lazarevic and Terziovski, 2000: 2). This is
to suggest that the HRM practice appears be significant in providing the training
(Nankervis et al., 1999; McElroy, 2001; Nankervis et al., 2002), particularly training for
front line associates in the hotel sector.

For many hotels, success depends mainly on the availability of qualified front line
associates who are able to provide and consistently maintain their company’s
operational standards of service (Putra, 2002b). Thus, many hotels now highlight
training activities for front line associates as a means of providing an outstanding service
for their customers (Putra, 2002a). The importance of training in the hotel sector will
discuss in the following section.

4.1 TRAINING

Training assists associates by increasing their skills (Gritz, 1993) and perhaps their
wages (Mangum, Mangum and Hansen, 1990) and assisting career advancement
(Tharenou, 1997a). Recent studies have found that participation in training chiefly at
organisational level based on structural and job variables (e.g., establishment
characteristics, work practices) and employee demographics (e.g., Green, Machin and Wilkinson, 1999; Clarke and Metalina, 2000; Frazis, Gittleman and Joyce, 2000; Whitfield, 2000).

The need for employee training is imperative (Knight and Salter, 1985; Mesa, 1999; Sullivan, 2000; Westbrook, 2001; Walsh, 2001). Training associates at all levels of the industry can help enable the hospitality industry to retain associates and to keep well-run operations (Herman and Eller, 1991). Hoffman (2001), the president of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers, says effective training provides a competitive advantage for the organisation. Berta (2001: 18) defines effective training as “relating to the organisations’ long-term goals, which include maintaining the organisations’ quality of service and providing career development for associates”. Hogan (2001:1) considers that most hoteliers today realise that while technology plays a growing role in the hospitality industry, “the people or personnel side of the business inevitably determines its long term success”. To develop these technical skills, organisations have moved away from unstructured, on-the-job training systems to more formal, structured training programs (Rosow and Zager, 1988 cited in Ford, Quinones, Sego, and Sorra, 1992). For many hotels, success depends largely on the availability of qualified associates who are able to translate and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service. Unqualified associates’ failure to deliver consistently high quality service could put a hotel’s reputation and long-term competitiveness at risk. Because hospitality products (e.g., service) are consumed and a hotel that is producing the service needs to have a qualified workforce, it appears that training for front line associates remains essential to conveying service quality and so to surviving in today’s environment. For example, Starwood hotel chain in Sydney conduct STAR training programs to facilitate front line associates to deal with customers. One of the training programs provided is in
effective communication. It is designed to support associates to communicate effectively (e.g., give warm greetings to the hotel’s guests and speak clearly). When an associate possesses this skill, it is manifested in a warm reception of guests and the guests are likely to leave the hotel with a positive impression. Consequently, this particular training is tailored to provide an additional service to guests.

In today’s rapidly changing business environment managers and front line associates need to keep in touch with their customers and respond to their changing wants. Horst Schulze, President of Ritz Carlton (cited in Bowen, 1998: 114) states it this way; “keep on listening to your customers because they change ... and if you have 100 percentage (satisfied customers) then you have to make sure that you listen and change ... just in case they change their expectations, that you change with them”. Iverson (1995) makes the point that while service quality depends on training, rewards structure and other factors (e.g., career development, team work and managerial as well as supervisory support), one fundamental requirement is an adequate supply of well-trained labour.

As Sindiga (1994: 45) points out, “training is the transition between formal education and the needs of occupation and employment”. Dowell (1995) discussed the role of training in the Australian hospitality industry and concluded that the link between productivity and training investment is at the enterprise level. Dowell (1995) said further that studies of the effective Australian service sector enterprises show that they devote more attention to training and deliberately attempt to recruit more highly skilled and qualified workers than their less effective counterparts. In the Australian context, Robson (1995) echoed Dowell’s support for training. He described the work of the National Employment and Training Taskforce in encouraging demand for trainees and delivering simple access for employers to traineeships. Peacock (1995) also recognised recent advancements made in Australian training systems, which provide significant opportunities for expansion into
hospitality/tourism training in the Asia Pacific region. He argues that the rapid economic
growth of Pacific Asian countries has increased demand for education and training,
which they cannot meet. The challenge will be a commitment to quality, and creative and
flexible delivery of these training services.

As discussed earlier, political boundaries are now being weakened (Nankervis, 2000;
Muller, 2001) and the tourism and hospitality industry, in the hotel sector particularly,
requires qualified associates. Training is considered essential for hotels in the Asia
Pacific region in order to transform hotel companies’ vision. Some nations in this region
have invested in the educational sector, particularly in hospitality degrees that
emphasise hospitality training (McIntosh, 1992 cited in Hing, 1998). Indeed, the course
content has been adjusted to reflect global and local trends (Wells, 1996; Hing, 1998)
and is expected to keep in line with customers’ expectations. Some of the government
universities in Australia have opened their offices in some Asia Pacific nations. For
example: The Sydney Graduate School of Management, University of Western Sydney
offers a tourism and hospitality management degree in undergraduate and postgraduate
degrees being conducted in Singapore, China, India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, UK,
and Hong Kong; Edith Cowan University (Faculty of Commerce) has set up its office at
University of Trisakti, Jakarta to conduct double degrees, and the University of Sydney
has been partnering with the University of Indonesia. This can help local students to
increase their knowledge and, more importantly, learn about different cultures from
foreign lecturers and/or visiting students. If these collaborative partnerships can be
enhanced, they could attract more students and hopefully, this could boost local tourism
business that might impact on increase hotels’ tenancy.

However, as previously explained, despite the minimisation of political boundaries
(Nankervis, 2000; Muller, 2001), the ongoing political turmoil in some Asian countries
(e.g. part of East of Indonesia, South of Philippine, border tension between India and Pakistan as well as North Korea and South Korea, and recently Thailand and Burma) and student visa scandals (e.g., students breach a work permit regulation) can have a negative influence on an on-going education program and can also have an impact on local tourism as well as hotels occupancy rates.

The role of governments (e.g., the Australian National Training Authority) in training for tourism and the hospitality industry is now expanding and helping to ensure that the "training provided is planned and structured to meet organisational as well as personal needs" (Cowley, 2001: 8). Governments can influence training through pre-existing education structures. Shepherd and Cooper (1995) and Hing (1998) identify the importance of the involvement of relevant stakeholders (e.g., educational institutions, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry/ACCI, media, the tourism and hospitality industry) in university courses, particularly in hospitality/tourism curriculum design. Ritchie (1995) supports the importance of involving stakeholders in designing and developing hospitality/tourism curriculum. According to Burrow (2002: 8) stakeholders can increase "sensitivity to industry needs, enhance programs which link schools and industry, implement mutual recognition of nationally recognised qualifications and training providers, expand education and training pathways, and focus on nationally endorsed training packages which comprise competency standards, assessment and qualification linked to a national framework".

A Hotel Management School (a hotel school developed by Inter Continental Hotel, Sydney) was formed together with Southern Cross University, Australia to assist students to obtain work experience from job placements. The effectiveness of this partnership requires support from the government (e.g., the Australian National Training Authority and Vocational, Education and Training - VET) to ensure that job placements
can build the necessary skills to a reasonable and measurable standard (Fullerton, 2001). Indeed, this partnership needs cooperation from the school and the university in the design and delivery of course materials which is based on a national accreditation policy and practice. By the time students complete the course, they are expected to know the industry work environment and thus be likely to perform well. This suggests that the government’s participation in providing a qualified work force for the tourism and hospitality industry in the area of matching the industry needs and hospitality/tourism curriculum design is important. Cowley (2001: 8) supports this by saying “organisations that offer nationally recognised training can in turn become an employer of choice, recognised for their quality education programs”. Burrow (2002: 8) supports Cowley’s statement and states, “ACCI supports an increased and ongoing partnership between industry, government and the community to ensure skills in the Australian workforce are developed and sustained”.

In order to meet the need for qualified associates in the hotel sector, it is now time for hotel providers to shift their concern from the elements of their training programs, that is, needs assessment and training methods, to a concern for the delivery of the training, particularly on relating the training to the program objectives, and closely matching training situations to work situations so trainees can transfer of training to their workplaces (Smith and Cooper, 2000; Hogan, 2001; Robotham, 1999 cited in Putra, 2002c). Similar to this, Latham and Seijts (1997 cited in Haccoun and Saks, 1998: 42) have emphasised the need for “embedding principles and theory to practice”. This is to suggest that the effectiveness of a training program provided in the hotel sector, in part, can be influenced by events that occur after an associate returns to the job (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Baldwin, 2000; Allan, 2002).
Transfer of training refers to “the use of knowledge, skills, and behaviours learned in training on the job” (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright, 2000: 226). Transfer of training strategies can be classified as those involving managers, trainers and associates and those implemented before, during and after training (Ford et al., 1992; Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Holton III, 1996; Baldwin, 2000; Machles, 2002). By including these key stakeholders, all involved can better understand the program content and its application to the workplace (Machles, 2002).

The role of the trainer, firstly, is to demonstrate training concepts during the sessions to assist trainees to identify how and when training will be used, and secondly the trainer also needs to contact all supervisors and ask that they encourage associates to apply learning in their workplaces (Ford et al., 1992; Garavaglia, 1993; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Machles, 2002). This is to suggest that the greater the level of trainer support, the more likely that transfer of training will occur (Noe et al., 2000).

The hotel sector has implemented an apprentice program to assist hospitality students to obtain work experience and this method can enhance transfer of training; for example, most hotels in Australia, in Queensland particularly, are now encouraging hospitality management students to undertake apprenticeships at certain hotels (see Baron’s study, 1999). The idea of an apprenticeship approach is “it combines practical work with structured training and aims to give people a nationally recognised qualification” (the Sunday Telegraph, 21 July 2002: 13). The growing popularity of the apprenticeship approach is supported by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER, March quarter 2002 cited in human resource monthly magazine 2002: 7) which states that “the number of people doing a new apprenticeship has increased by 10 per cent since 31 March last year”. This, in part, can increase students’ motivation to learn and more importantly give them job practice in a real work situation. The apprenticeship
approach has been designed and created to ensure that young people get the help they deserve and the industry gets the talent it needs (see Baron’s study, 1999). Giles (cited in Boulard, 2000: 92) made comments on the usefulness of using an apprenticeship approach by saying “people just love it ... have a stand up trainer who comes to the workplace in person ... because apprenticeship program is hands-on training method”. This suggests that the use of the apprenticeship approach as a tool to foster transfer of training has been valuable to many people.

It appears that the importance of the trainer support, the degree of similarity between the training session and the workplace, combined with the apprentices program are likely to foster transfer of training to the job.

However, there are some potential transfer of training difficulties such as lack of reinforcement on the job; interference from the immediate environment; an unsupportive organisational culture or climate; and the employee’s view that training is impractical or irrelevant (Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Machles, 2002). The most common link between these barriers is lack of management intervention and involvement (Machles, 2002). In addition, Machles (2002) outlines some other potential transfer of training barriers such as inconsistencies in the workplace (e.g., job changed after training), lack of technology or equipment to support training, negative attitudes and behaviours by co-workers (e.g., peer pressure, unsupportive co-workers) and lack of management understanding.

It can be argued that the lack of understanding (employers, managers, associates, supervisors and trainers) of the importance of the transfer of training in the workplace by all stakeholders leaves the hospitality industry vulnerable. In addition, many casual staff work in this area (Lowry, Simon and Kimberley, 2002) and quality service provision requires commitment to delivering and maintaining outstanding service. Casual workers
very often do not have this level of commitment and this can also contribute to difficulties in transferring learning to their workplaces and often are not offered such training and development.

To be successful in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, managers are expected to constantly review, find out, and know what customers are looking for and try to meet these needs and expectations (Nisky, 2001). In the hotel sector, there are huge changes in guest needs and the business has to be very open to listening to what the guests are asking for (Nisky, 2001). Associates have the opportunity to collect information directly from the guests, given proper training. The usefulness of information collection systems training programs is that they can provide information that is useful for an organisation (Teare, Bowen and Hing, 1998); for example, good communication between associates and managers not only provides good customer information, but it also supports a service culture by identifying management problems and solutions to those problems (Teare et al., 1998). To ensure that trainees apply learning from information collection systems training programs, managers need to create a positive environment (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Holton III, 1996; Burke, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Burke and Baldwin, 1999; Baron, 1999).

Bronwell (1994 cited in Teare et al., 1998) focused on the importance of managers creating an environment that fosters good communication between associates and management. He argues that the vision of strong listening environments may foster practices and attitudes that become the most important tool managers bring with them into the 21st century. A study by Sparks (1994) found that customers evaluate the quality of the service, in part, on the manner in which associates communicate information. Thus, part of customer satisfaction is dependent on the ability of associates to listen to customers and communicate with them (Bowen, 1998). Bowen (1998) uses the term
‘listening posts’ to refer to staff listening to customers. Meanwhile, Hsieh, O’Leary, Morrison and Chang (1993) use the term ‘seeing is believing’ to refer to obtaining direct information from hotel guests. According to Bowen (1998) one of the world’s greatest listening organisations is the Ritz-Carlton chain of luxury hotels; for example, Bowen (1998) found that at the Ritz-Carlton the staff is trained to listen for guest preferences, not always stated in the form of direct enquiries. He concluded that when a guest preference becomes known it is noted on a guest preference form by any frontline service associates and this information is then downloaded into the chain’s database and each morning guest preference histories are queried for the day’s reservations. The benefits of this ‘listening posts’ system include increased satisfaction and ‘word of mouth’ advertising by satisfied guests (Bowen, 1998). It appears, then, that the increased customer satisfaction comes through better complaint resolution and a more responsive service.

In summary, then, regardless of what kind of training programs are provided in the tourism and hospitality industry, in the hotel sector particularly, the purposes of the training, and who delivers the programs, the effectiveness of such training programs is measured by the transfer of training to the workplace. Kirkpatrick (1998: 57) supports this by saying “the effectiveness of any training programs is determined by the program transfer to the job”. Many scholars (e.g., Wexley and Baldwin, 1986; Gist, Bavetta and Stevens, 1990; Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993; Garavaglia, 1993; Burke, 1997; May and Kahnweiler, 2000; Morgan and Casper, 2000; Yamnill and McLean, 2001; Hirsch, 2001) who investigate transfer of training on the job support Kirkpatrick’s opinion.

In addition to improved skills, increased knowledge and positive attitudes, training can reduce, arguably, the level of turnover which seem to be of concern to the hotel sector (Deery, 1999; Lake, 2001; Marshall, 2001; Gaschen, 2001). This is supported by Tara
Davey (Executive Director of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers, cited in Boulard, 2000: 92) who says that "training lowers the turnover rate and if an employee in a particular job (particularly in sales or catering or management which require specific skills) is well trained and working at peak efficiency, they usually know it and are happier with their jobs, more successful at what they do and stay in the company longer". Roger Anderson (administrative assistant with the Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialisation Centre which trains associates for specific jobs in the hospitality industry, cited in Boulard, 2000: 92) states that "specific training for specific positions does have a positive effect on how long an employee is willing to stay on", and that on the job training often seems to be the best training of all. A study by Doeringer and Piore (1971 cited in Deery, 1999: 98) and by Althauser and Kalleberg (1981 cited in Deery, 1999: 98) supported Davey (cited in Boulard, 2000: 92) and Anderson's (cited in Boulard, 2000: 92) statements that "firm specific training should make the associates less mobile than those associates who have undertaken general training". As a consequence, it seems that employee turnover should be lower in those industries which promote firm specific training (Deery, 1999).

However, despite the claim that training increased skills, increased knowledge, improved positive attitudes, and reduced turnover levels, very little money was spent on induction training programs and/or training programs for new responsibilities (Deery, 1999). This may be because the hotel sector predominantly recruited apprenticeship students who were concerned mainly about achieving industrial placement (e.g., see Baron's study, 1999). Thus, hotel managers may not want to spend money on training programs. This may be due to many casual staff in the industry (Lowry et al., 2002). Employers seem less inclined to provide training for casual workers than for permanent associates because employers believe that the organisation will not receive longer term returns
from investing in such training (Lowry et al., 2002). On the other hand, casual associates may be less inclined to participate in job-related training because of the lack of job security or because the training is too specific to the job and less transferable than other forms of training (VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1999 cited in Lowry et al., 2002).

It appears that the hotel sector may not see the benefits of socialising casual associates into the culture of the organisation, nor may they encourage the use of training for promotional opportunities.

Nevertheless, training is essential to service industries because organisations rely on employee knowledge, skill, and initiative to identify and resolve problems and to ensure ‘superior’ standards of customer care (Lowry et al., 2002). On one hand, associates are more likely to be committed to employers who are willing to support their long term career development and personal career aspirations (Buick and Muthu, 1997; Dessler, 1999).

In the past the tourism and hospitality industry contributed to an economy regardless of political uncertainty in some parts of the world, the instability of currencies, and increasing phenomenon of strategic alliances. Training programs enjoyed a unique status in the business world as expenses were typically easy to justify. Training programs still exist today but their corresponding automatic assumption of worth is fading and companies now have to be accountable for the money they spend on training (Rowe, 1998). The effect of this is to turn up the pressure for training accountability.

Because of the lack of research demonstrating a clear link between the adoption of HRM practices and performance in hotels, research in the hotel sector needs to be carried out to establish a link between HRM and service quality which, in turn, is related to trainees’
performances. In addition, as stated earlier, little research has been done on evaluating training in the hospitality industry for front line associates, particularly in the hotel sector.

The lack of research underpinning training evaluation procedures is a weak point in the area of Human Resource Management (Holton III, 1996) even though HRM theory agrees with the importance of evaluation (Plant and Ryan, 1992; Fitz-enz, 1994; Donnison, 1995; Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998; Spitser, 1999; Nankervis et al., 1999; Cooke, 2000; Faulkner, 2000; Nankervis et al., 2002). In addition, the importance of determining how transfer of training to the workplace influences trainees’ work performances can be seen as the driving force behind conduct training evaluation.

There are about as many thoughts on how to gauge training effectiveness, as there are trainers (Alliger and Janak, 1989). For years, training practitioners have often relied on Donald Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model (1959 – 1998), also known as the four-level evaluation model as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kimmerling, 1993; Goldstein, 1993; Kaufman and Keller, 1994; Parry, 1996; Abernathy, 1999; Cooke, 2000).

However, Holton III (1996: 5) states, “Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model is flawed due to lack of clarification, and therefore needs to be modified”. A number of modifications to the model have been suggested. For example: Hamblin (1974) added a fifth level to reflect training’s ultimate value in terms of organisation success criteria, such as economic benefits; Kaufman and Keller (1994) and Phillips (1998) focused more specifically on return on investment (ROI) in Kirkpatrick’s level four (organisational results); Brinkerhoff (1988, 1998) even proposed a six level model that is level one (goal setting), level two (program design), level three (program implementation), level four (immediate outcomes), level five (intermediate outcomes) and level six (impacts and worth).
Nevertheless, although this work has contributed greatly to the concept thinking about training evaluation, “the power of Kirkpatrick four level evaluation model lies in its simplicity and its ability to help people to begin conducting training evaluation in the workplace” (Alliger and Janak, 1989: 331). In addition, Kirkpatrick (1996: 55) states, “the model’s main purpose is to clarify the meaning of evaluation and offer guidelines on how to get started and proceed, the model is simple and practical, easily to understand and use”. Training evaluation is very useful because most organisations do not tackle evaluation on a broad scale; usually they work at only one or two levels.

This is to suggest that in line with Alliger and Janak, and Kirkpatrick’s point of view, the paper will discuss Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation in the next section, and then demonstrate it at the four hotels in Sydney.

4.2 Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation

Since Kirkpatrick’s model was first published in 1959 the further development of approaches to the evaluation of training has engendered an ongoing interest. The 4-evaluation levels used by Kirkpatrick (level 1: reaction, level 2: learning, level 3: behaviour, and level 4: results) now are being both challenged by some and further refined by others (Holton III, 1996) and to implement Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation of each level requires the evaluation of preceding levels (Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998).

This simple ‘taxonomy’ of training criteria (Holton III, 1996) became very popular in business and academia because it addressed a need to understand training evaluation simply yet systematically (Shelton and Alliger, 1993). The model’s simplicity is appealing but, as revealed in more recent work, this simplicity is also a liability. Alliger and Janak (1989) conducted a meta-analytic review of the literature based on Kirkpatrick's model.
They concluded that “Kirkpatrick’s model provides a vocabulary and rough taxonomy for criteria and at the same time, Kirkpatrick’s model, through its easily adopted vocabulary and a number of (often implicit) assumptions, can tend to misunderstandings and overgeneralizations” (p: 331 – 332).

Some researchers have gone further and presented compelling arguments that entirely different and better models of training evaluation are needed (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kraiger, Ford and Salas, 1993; Holton III, 1996; Phillips, 1998). New approaches are undoubtedly called for, and a thorough model of training effectiveness must include much more than is addressed by any taxonomy of training criteria (Holton III, 1996).

Nevertheless, the prevalence of Kirkpatrick’s model is acknowledged by many scholars; for example, Brinkerhoff (1988: 66) says, “Kirkpatrick proposed a four step model that has provided a sound and simply understood conceptual base for evaluating … and the model clearly articulates four levels of outcome for any training session”. Alliger and Janak (1989: 331) state, “the power of Kirkpatrick’s model is its ability to help people think about training evaluation criteria, provides a vocabulary and rough taxonomy for criteria”. Likewise, Talbot (1992: 28) says, “Kirkpatrick’s model is popular for assessing the effectiveness of training program”. Furthermore, Plant and Ryan (1992: 23) state, “Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels are widely accepted by the corporate training community and forms the basis of evaluation”. Similarly, Faerman and Ban (1993: 300) state, “Kirkpatrick’s model is used as a basic framework for identifying the different outcomes of training”. Moreover, Holton III (1996: 5 – 6) says, “the Kirkpatrick model is elegant in its simplicity and has contributed greatly to HRD … and is acknowledged by many practitioners as the standard in the field”. In addition, Phillips (1998: 115) states, “Kirkpatrick model provided a useful, understandable and practical way in which practitioners could evaluate their programs … the four level model provides a reference
for many current studies about evaluation”. Additionally, Bramley and Kitson (1994 cited in Phillips, 1998: 114) state, “the model has a reputation throughout the world as a logical, practical, and useful framework to pursue evaluation”. Similarly, Gordon (1999: 40) says, “the four levels are logical framework”. Recently, Naugle, Naugle, and Naugle (2000: 135) in their comprehensive approach to evaluating teacher performance suggest “borrowing Kirkpatrick’s approach because of its simplicity”. All of these reinforce the growing widespread use of Kirkpatrick’s model and “the model was well received and has since been the model of choice for the practitioners” (Kaufman and Keller, 1994 cited in Phillips, 1998: 114). Morgan and Casper (2000: 301) support this, saying “Kirkpatrick’s model has served as the organizing scheme for training evaluation for both practitioners and researchers”.

Since Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation was published, there has been a tremendous amount of research undertaken to test Kirkpatrick’s model (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Ford, Kozlowski, Kraiger, Salas and Teachout, 1997). Training evaluation, as a topic, is constantly increasing in importance, hence understanding training evaluation criteria is also critical for researchers and practitioners alike (Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennet, Traver and Shotland, 1997; Phillips, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 1998). Understanding training evaluation levels then can assist managers to evaluate their training programs to ensure that training program objectives are achieved, which can contribute to the organisational result (Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998).

**Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation levels are as follows:**

**Level 1. Reactions**

Evaluation at the first level of Kirkpatrick’s model asks trainees what they liked and what they felt about training. That is, the reactions sought are emotionally based opinions.
Indeed, the term 'reactions' seems to imply an immediate, more or less unthinking, response. Evaluating reaction is probably the easiest, but least reliable and most subjective aspect of evaluation using Kirkpatrick's model. However it is the most common measure of training effectiveness. A systematic approach to gauging trainees' reactions to the program could include questions such as are the program guidelines clear and communicated well?, or how do you rate the program as an educational experience to assist you to do your job better?. The implication is that it is imperative to find out how trainees feel about the program. Their reaction, especially if it is positive, can provide managers with information for continuing, improving or possibly terminating current programs (Kirkpatrick, 1998) and can enable them to build on the success of the programs.

However, several researchers have suggested that reaction measures that directly ask trainees about the transferability or utility of the training should be more closely related to other criteria (e.g., Alliger and Janak, 1989; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992). Warr and Bunce (1995) have expanded this and suggested a 'tripartite' division of reaction measures: enjoyment of training, usefulness of training, and difficulty of training. However, the difficulty of training seems to be rarely asked of trainees (Alliger et al., 1997) possibly because the decisions on the training have already been taken and people may not want to alter the training in response to trainees, but prefer to focus on the organisational requirements.

**Level 2. Learning**

Evaluation at the second level is typically undertaken immediately after a program in terms of the amount of learning (Warr, Allan and Birdi, 1999) and in most cases the
focus is upon the acquisition of knowledge or new skills or performance of trained tasks immediately after training (Alliger et al., 1997).

Managers can measure if certain skills or awareness levels have changed since the implementation of the program (Nelson and Dailey, 1998). Measuring learning, therefore, means determining one or more of the following: "what knowledge was learned? what skills were developed or improved? what attitudes were changed"? (Kirkpatrick, 1998: 39).

**Level 3. Behaviour/skill demonstration.**

Kirkpatrick (1998) actually used the term ‘behaviour’ to refer to any behavioural changes that occur as a result of training or ‘performance’ (Holton III, 1996). However, he did not make a clear distinction between behaviour demonstrated in the training context and behaviour demonstrated on the job. That is, his Level 3 may include both results of behavioural skill tests administered at the conclusion of training (i.e., indications of ‘can do’) as well as on-the-job performance (i.e., indications of ‘does do’). It seems in keeping with Kirkpatrick’s model, however, to retain level 3 as representative of transfer of training to the job environment. It is application to the job that, in most cases, defines training success (Alliger, Tannenbaum and Bennett, 1995; Alliger et al., 1997).

**Level 4. Results.**

Results criteria are meant to be those where organisational impact is indexed. Examples of results criteria include productivity gains, customer satisfaction, cost-savings, employee morale (for manager training), and profitability. In some ways, organisational results criteria represent, for training evaluation, the ‘ultimate’ criteria and often are
perceived as most fundamental to judging training success. These qualities make level 4 of training criteria seem highly desirable.

However, Kirkpatrick (1998) found that many managers and many trainers as well have only evaluated training programs at the first level - which is reaction, by using a trainee satisfaction survey - because they are quick and simple. Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined several possible reasons for the failure to further systematically utilise all levels of his model:

- Managers do not consider evaluation to be important,
- Managers do not know how to evaluate training beyond the first level,
- There is no pressure from higher management to do more.

Although the Kirkpatrick (1998) evaluation model appears straightforward and has contributed significantly to HRD, according to Holton III (1996) the lack of research to further develop and substantiate the model is a glaring shortcoming for the field. As a result, a lot of training practitioners and/or managers have only used the ‘reaction’ level, to determine the effectiveness of training programs (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002; Putra, 2002a) and this is inadequate (Holton III, 1996). To support this view, studies have been conducted by Noe and Schmitt (1986); Alliger and Janak (1989); Mathieu, Tannenbaum and Salas (1992) and Holton III (1996) who have demonstrated that training evaluations based on reaction only were insufficient.

It can be said, therefore conducting evaluations based on trainees’ reactions alone might not be adequate to make correct decisions about HRD interventions. Obtaining information from a single variable is ineffective and this can cause erroneous
conclusions. For these reasons, implementing all of Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation levels is needed to validate each level and the model as a whole.

However, as previously mentioned, little research has been done on evaluating training for front line associates in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector. Most of the training that does occur is for managers (Herman and Eller, 1991). Both academics and practitioners have argued that little attention is given to efforts to assess whether training participants actually transfer what they learn in the classroom to the actual work environment. Miller (1990: 429), for example, states that while “millions of dollars are spent on training . . . there is little empirical evidence linking training to improved job performance”. Furthermore, Newstorm (1986 cited in Faerman and Ban, 1993: 299) states that “too much money and attention are spent on the design and delivery of programs and not enough on efforts to increase the transfer of training to the work environment”. These ideas and attitudes have led to increased interest in the evaluation of training programs for front line associates on the part of both academics and practitioners.

As stated earlier, the topic is worthy of research attention principally because of the lack of research conducted in this area in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector. Training can be costly. If the money is spent on training and no evaluation is taken, it is wasted and could have been better spent elsewhere. Mbawo (1995) gave the example that most of the investment in organisational training and development may be wasted because organisations never properly evaluate their training programs, they do not know whether the learning is ever fully applied on the job. Thus, it is essential to have proper evaluation of whether training actually works and is cost effective.
In addition, research would have to provide reasonably objective and preferably independent information about whether money spent on training is well spent. Therefore, research needs to be carried out to investigate the effectiveness of training programs for front line associates in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector.
5. CONCLUSION

This review has sought to investigate the relevant literature on tourism and the hospitality industry: its nature and environment in relation to its capacity to remain competitive in today’s rapidly changing marketplace. The literature reveals that tourism and the hospitality industry appear structurally and strategically complex and both seem dependent upon governments’ involvement, global stability and an internationally stable situation. In addition, this review has canvassed the importance of linking training activities to organisational bottom lines in line with HRM strategic business objectives. One of HRM’s roles is to provide training programs for managers as well as for associates. Furthermore, after training is completed, organisations need to know whether the objectives are achieved and one way to find out training’s effectiveness (e.g. trainees applied learning to their workplaces) is by conducting training evaluation.

As discussed formerly, many practitioners and managers rely on Kirkpatrick’s model and indeed this review has examined Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation theory in relation to each of its level and the problems surrounding the model; yet, the model is still the most frequently implemented. Rapidly evolving technology, increasing global competition, a more diverse workforce and the importance to have a qualified workforce have pushed the hotel industry to begin evaluating its training activities.

In this context, it is surprising that very little information is available and written directly on the training evaluation issue and even less is available on how the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, actually conducts current evaluation practices. The material on HRM in the hotel sector and an understanding of Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation theory appears to suggest ways in which each level of Kirkpatrick’s model can be enhanced.
EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS

EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FRONT LINE ASSOCIATES IN THE HOTEL SECTOR IN SYDNEY: DEMONSTRATING KIRKPATRICK' S MODEL
EVALUATING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FRONT LINE ASSOCIATES IN THE HOTEL SECTOR IN SYDNEY: DEMONSTRATING KIRKPATRICK’ S MODEL

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KIRKPATRICK'S MODEL IN THE HOTEL SECTOR: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THE FUTURE CONTEXT OF TOURISM AND THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY AS WELL AS TRAINING IN THE HOTEL SECTOR: CHALLENGES AND ISSUES

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CHAPTER 1    INTRODUCTION

"Twenty five to thirty years ago, even, the idea that Australia’s hospitality and tourism industries would occupy the role they do in the Australian way of life and the Australian economy and the hopes that we have for the future of our country, would have been completely undreamt of. Indeed, the idea of Australians being specialists at hospitality and recreation is something or other people twenty five to thirty years ago didn’t image" (The Prime Minister, John Howard, address at the Tourism Council Australia lunch, Regent Hotel, Sydney, 29 August 1997 cited in Hall, 1998: 1)

1.1. Overview

The tourism industry has become a major stimulus for economic development in developed and developing countries and even in underdeveloped countries that are struggling to bring money in under uncertain economic circumstances.

Tourism is “widely regarded as the growth industry of the 1990s, continuing into the twenty first century” (Hall, 1998: 1). According to Hall (1995, 1998) the 1980s and the early 1990s have seen an enormous expansion in the number of international visitors coming to Australia and an increased recognition of the financial significance of tourism. As stated previously, Australia is situated in a strategic location and this contributes to the growth in the tourism industry. Furthermore within Australia, Sydney has been voted the world’s best city followed by Perth as the world’s friendliest city (the Sunday Telegraph, 21 July 2002). Tasmania and The Great Barrier Reef were ranked second and third in the top islands category (the Sunday Telegraph, 21 July 2002). As a result, the tourism industry is regarded as one of several keys mechanisms for economic development and for the generation of employment (Hall, 1998); for example, in the financial year 1995/96, the tourism industry accounted for around 7.5 per cent of
Australia’s GDP, and was responsible for the direct employment of some 700,000 people and indirectly for another 330,000 (Mazitelli, 1999).

Tourism is increasingly important in Australia’s overall trade and economy and in enhancing cultural links with other countries; for example; Mazitelli (1999) states that international tourism in Australia generated export earnings of A$15.5 billion in the financial year 1996/97, which is an increase of over 5 per cent over the previous year. In the financial year 1996/97, the number of overseas arrivals increased by over 7 per cent over the previous year.

Many travellers have contributed to the local economy, for example: in 1998 the WTO estimated that world spending on international tourism reached about US$445 billion (Dittmer, 2002). Indeed, Dittmer (2002) also noted that the WTO predicts that receipts from international tourism will reach US$1.55 trillion by year 2010 and worldwide travel and tourism employs more than 200 million people.

Tourism industry consists of firms and people who serve the needs of travellers, direct providers such as airlines, the hotel sector and motels, restaurants, airlines, travel agents, shops selling goods etc and this requires staff who can convey a high level of service. Hospitality enterprises develop, as a direct consequence of the development of the tourism industry and this in turn will boost a local economy in terms of job growth, bringing in travellers and revenue.

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the world’s major industries and so greatly influences the world’s economic development, countries’ balances of payments, employment and regional balances (Lockwood and Medlik, 2000). They are also important socially, culturally and environmentally for those who become tourists and for their hosts. The future of tourism and hospitality is of interest to many businesses and
other organisations as well as to governments (Lockwood and Medlik, 2000; Dittmer, 2002).

However, since September 11th and massive airline layoffs (e.g. the collapse of Ansett and its regional airlines subsidiary), restaurants and the hotel sector that depend on tourism dollars have suffered. A lot of people are now very much concerned about safety issues and this affects tourism and hospitality directly and indirectly. Directly, the effect is that people are too worried to go abroad and think that similar accidents could occur at any time. Indirectly, the effect is when businesses shut down gradually because the number of travellers is declining over time. Furthermore travellers also fear that regional crises will threaten the industry (the Australian Financial Review, 29 October 1997: 36 cited in Nankervis, 2000). In fact, recent economic and political turmoil in Asian countries such as Indonesia, South Korea, Japan, China, The Philippines and Thailand may cause harm to the industry and possibly effect the economic benefits of the whole industry community. Recently, the Bali bombing has been a blow for the tourism industry in Indonesia (the SMH, 14 October 2002). Some countries (e.g., UK, America, and Australia) have advised travellers to cancel their plans to visit Bali (CNN news, 14 October 2002) and this has caused tourists from other countries to cancel their trips to Bali (the Australian, 15 October 2002). The Bali bombings could reduce the confidence of tourists to visit other tourist destinations (the SMH, 14 October 2002).

However, tourism and the hospitality industry are convinced that political stability will soon prevail (the Australian Financial Review, 29 October 1997), the economy will grow, job opportunities will rise and all of this will boost both the industry’s confidence and the number of travellers (Dittmer, 2002).
In order to achieve customer satisfaction, the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, needs to spend money on training its associates to meet and exceed guests' expectations. Indeed, training programs need to be included as an essential activity for Human Resource Management (HRM) if tourism and particularly the hotel business are to remain competitive. It can be argued that effective HRM therefore needs to emphasise the importance of training and development, compensation, and employee relations for the hospitality organisations to remain viable in the future.

When investing in training, organisations need to be aware of its effectiveness, that is, that training objectives have been achieved. In order to find out whether managers need to continue, improve, or terminate a training activity, an evaluation has to be carried out. Although measuring the effectiveness of training is not a new area, it is not on the whole recognised as a priority by many organisations (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

A number of models have been refined and developed to evaluate training (Holton III, 1996), but most practitioners have relied upon Kirkpatrick's model because it is simple and applicable (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Holton III, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Cooke, 2000). Indeed, Watkins, Leigh, Foshay, and Kaufman (1998: 90) state "his model has been used as a basic model for the identification and targeting of training specific interventions in business, government, and industry alike".

However, Holton III (1996: 5) states "the four level Kirkpatrick model has received little research and is seldom fully implemented in organisations" and if it is implemented, according to Alliger and Janak, (1989), Kirkpatrick, (1998), Haven and Rowden (2001) training is evaluated on the reaction level only because it is quick and easy to conduct, and less money is required.
This research argues that Kirkpatrick’s model appears to be applied rarely in the hospitality industry including the hotel sector. Most scholars (e.g., Alliger and Janak, 1989; Carnevale and Schutz, 1990; Scovel, 1990; Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992; Faerman and Ban, 1993; Lewis and Thornhill, 1994; Gordon 1996; Lupton, Weiss, and Peterson, 1999; Spitzer, 1999; Honeycutt and Stevenson 1989 cited in Honeycutt Jr, Karande, Attia, Maurer, 2001;Honeycutt Jr, et al, 2001) only stated the importance of conducting training program evaluations, without discussing or fully demonstrating the implementation of Kirkpatrick’s model. Evaluating training programs for front line associates in the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, is very rarely a topic. Consequently, research needs to be carried out in the hotel sector to determine the effectiveness of the training programs provided.

Given the problems briefly discussed above, the following section briefly examines the nature of tourism and the hospitality industry, its nature, and the internal and external threats it must deal with in order to create and maintain a competitive edge in today’s environment. It also discusses training in the hotel sector as well as the importance of HRM in the hotel sector. In addition, this research seeks to evaluate training programs at four hotels selected in Sydney applying Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model.
1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Aims

The specific aims of this study are:

1. To analyse the nature of the hospitality industry;

2. To discuss Kirkpatrick’s four training evaluation levels;

3. To evaluate a training program the hotel sector using Kirkpatrick’s four evaluation levels of the Starwood Hotel chains’ Sydney;

4. To make recommendations for improving training programs for front line associates.

1.2.2. Scope and limitations

This project demonstrates Kirkpatrick’s (1998) four-level training evaluation model’s applicability to the hotel sector in Sydney. As this project is essentially a demonstration of the model, its focus is primarily conceptual in the evaluation of training programs for front line associates. Its contribution must be judged in light of the difficulties involved. An obvious limitation of the model is that the model ignores other factors. Holton III (1996) listed the other factors such as motivation elements (e.g., motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, and expected utility), environment elements (e.g., transfer climate and work environment), and outcomes (e.g., learning, individual performance, job ability, and job readiness) that may contribute to each of the four-levels.

However, as Kirkpatrick (1998) argues, the power of his model is in its simplicity and its ability to assist people to think about training evaluation criteria. For the sake of
comprehensiveness, the project focuses on Kirkpatrick’s four-level training evaluation in order to find out whether the model is applicable and workable in the hospitality industry. To support this project, several small qualitative studies have been undertaken.

A second limitation is that this project was only conducted in Sydney at Starwood hotel chains and these choices necessarily mean that the project results may not be directly applicable to Stanwood hotel chains worldwide nor to the hotel sector in general.

However, this project can inform Hotel Managers of how other hotels in the Starwood hotel chain in Sydney have performed. The Hotel Managers can utilise the project’s findings to help ascertain whether the objectives of the training programs offered for front line associates have been achieved.

In addition, this research will demonstrate whether Kirkpatrick’s four level training evaluations is workable in the hotel sector.

1.2.3. Research methods

A comprehensive literature review and Internet search have been carried out, using the themes of tourism and hospitality industry and its business environment, training theory, program evaluation theory and Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation theory. This investigation provided information on the nature of tourism and the hospitality industry, HRM in the hotel sector, training in the hotel sector, current and relevant business issues and theories underpinning the Kirkpatrick training evaluation theory.
Following this research, some empirical research was undertaken for the purpose of testing the workability of Kirkpatrick’s four training evaluation levels. This research was staged as follow:

1. The researcher sought the approval from the Area Director of Human Resources and the Manager of Learning and Development to conduct the field study (for further details see chapter 4),

2. Surveys of front line associates and of managers at Starwood hotels in Sydney were conducted.

1.2.4. Research outcomes

In accordance with The Sydney Graduate School of Management new criteria (for further details see appendix 7) and consistent with the University of Western Sydney Doctor of Business Administration guidelines, the following paper series have been produced:

- **Conference paper**

  “Elements of Training Programs for front line associates”.

Presented at the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) conference in Fremantle, Western Australia, 6 – 9 February 2002.

- **Conference paper**

  “Factors that assist trainees to transfer learning to the job: A Meta analysis”.

Presented at the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) conference in Fremantle, Western Australia, 6 – 9 February 2002.
• **Working paper**

"Evaluating training programs for front line associates: implementing Kirkpatrick’s model in the hospitality industry"

This paper was accepted as an abstract and presented at the Council for Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE) conference in Fremantle, Western Australia, 6 – 9 February 2002. The abstract published on ‘the Book of Abstracts’ \(^1\) page 64.

• **Working paper**

Evaluating training programs: an exploratory study of transfer of learning onto the job at Hotel A and Hotel B, Sydney, Australia.

The paper has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management Vol 11 No 1 which is due for publication in January 2004.

(See attachment for further details)

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\(^1\) The Book of Abstracts is a pre-Conference publication of the presentations to be made at the CAUTHE 2002 International Research Conference, held in Western Australia at the Fremantle Esplanade Hotel.
CHAPTER 2: TRAINING IN THE HOTEL SECTOR

“The real purpose of training is to improve the performance of the organisation” (Lorne Armstrong, Vice President of the Pacific Centre for Leadership in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada cited in Abernathy, 1999: 23)

2. Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is a business that can be integrated across and through a community (Brymer, 2000). As stated earlier, the industry relies heavily on having a qualified workforce and one tool to supply such a workforce for the delivery of outstanding customer service is training.

Given that training is important for the industry, it is also valuable to discuss the nature of the tourism and hospitality industry and how training plays a significant role in the industry.

2.1. Tourism and the hospitality industry: a definition

2.1.1. Definitions of tourism

Understanding the various definitions of tourism is very important at both practical and theoretical levels (Hall, 1995, 1998). The many perceptions of what constitutes tourism are reflected in the multitude of definitions of tourism. For example: Leiper’s (1979) classification of definitions of tourism as ‘economic’, ‘technical’, or ‘holistic’ moves towards clarifying the concept. Pearce (1987:1) states that

“tourism is essentially about people and places, the places one group of people leave, visit and pass through, the other groups who make their trip possible and those they encounter along the
way. In a more technical sense, tourism may be thought of as the relationships and phenomena arising out of the journey and temporary stays of people travelling primarily for leisure or recreational purposes”.

The Australian Government Committee Inquiry into Tourism (1987a, 1987b cited in Hall, 1998:7 and the Australian Bureau of Industry Economics, 1984 cited in Hall, 1998:7) states “tourism included all overnight and certain day trips undertaken by Australian residents and all visits to Australia by overseas residents of less than 12 months duration”.

However, one major problem that many scholars have in approaching tourism is the confusion between the terms ‘tourism’ and the concept of the term ‘tourism industry’ (Hall, 1995, 1998). The shortcomings or problem of a lack of universal tourism definitions (Nankervis, 2000) is that “they do not adequately reflect the fact that tourism is an industry and instead indicate a failure to conform to existing standards and conventions used in other fields” (Smith, 1988: 181 cited in Hall, 1998: 8).

Very few will agree on a single definition of tourism and the tourism industry has the means to mobilise or revitalise local communities, geographic regions and even entire countries and, in fact, tourism can represent an environment of services and products that influence a community economically, physically, and socially through interaction (Brymer, 2000). The Australian Government Committee of Inquiry into Tourism (1987a:11 cited in Hall, 1998: 9) describes the tourism industry as:

“not one discrete entity but a collection of inter industry goods and services which constitute the travel experience ... the definition can vary according to whether it includes industries which wholly, primarily, partially or incidentally provide goods and services to the tourist”.

12
Certainly, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO, cited in Sorensen, 1997: 3) defines international tourists as:

“any persons who travels to a country other than that in which he or she has his or her usual residence that the main purpose of whose visit is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the country visited and who is staying for a period of a year or less”.

Collins Concise English dictionary (1995: 1225) defines a tourist as “a person who travels for pleasure, usually sightseeing and staying in the hotel sector”. The WTO (cited in Escoffier and Remington, 1998: 37) defines tourism as “the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes”.

Another definition suggests that the business of tourism includes lodging, food service, the performing arts, sports, retail, recreation, transportation, special events, conventions, tours and tour operator, natural attractions, historic attractions, amusement parks, resorts, cruise lines and many other segments (Brymer, 2000). Pearce, Morrison and Rutledge (1998 cited in Nankervis, 2000: 53) attempt to capture all previous definitions and to include all stakeholders:

“Tourism is the sum of government and private sector activities which shape and serve the needs and manage the consequences of holiday and business travel. The central activities of the government and private sector include promotion and planning, providing services and preventing impacts”.

Salom (2001: 801) defines tourism as “the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected with any earning activity”. This basic concept was broadened so that it now includes other forms of business and vocational
travel that do not entail permanent residence or remunerated employment from within the places visited. Furthermore, Salom (2001) argues that tourism can also be viewed as: a social phenomenon, not a production activity; the sum of the expenditures of all travellers or visitors for all purposes; an experience or process, not a product.

Angelo and Vladimir (2001: 31) quote Fretchiling's definition of the tourism industry as "a collection of organisations and establishments that derive all or a significant portion of their income from providing goods and services purchased on a trip to the traveller".

A more recent definition by Angelo and Vladimir (2001: 31) state that tourism industry:

"An interrelated amalgamation of those business and agencies which totally or in part provide the means of transport, goods, services, and other facilities for travel outside of the home community for any purpose not related to day-to-day activity".

As illustrated in all the above definitions of tourism, there are three key features of tourism, and these are defined by Hall (1998: 9) as follows:

1. "The tourism industry is regarded as essentially a service industry."

2. The inclusion of business, pleasure, and leisure activities emphasises the nature of the goods a traveller requires to make the trip more successful, easier and enjoyable.

3. The notion of a 'home environment' which refers to the arbitrary delineation of a distance threshold or period of overnight stay"

Nankervis (2000) argues that it seems that the application of tight and different definitions to the tourism industry, distinguished by a plethora of diverse and sometimes ethereal 'products' and services and operated through a complex web of relationships
and structures is inadequate. In addition, Lickorish and Jenkins (1999) bear out that the problem of definition is a serious and continuing difficulty for analysts of tourism, in particular the amorphous nature of the tourism industry has made it difficult to evaluate its impact on the economy relative to other sectors in the economy.

However, it can be argued that regardless of the numerous tourism definitions, what needs to be highlighted is that these activities can substantially improve the quality of life for every country in many ways, such as job creation, export growth, national income and return on investment. In terms of the tourism industry, it is essentially an economic concept based upon the fact that travellers spend money at the destination visited. Thus, the tourism industry represents an external injection of wealth and substantial revenue for the visitor reception area. Furthermore, in terms of the tourism industry, it may be best portrayed as the aggregate of all business that directly provide goods and/or services to facilitate and/or to provide business and pleasure as well as leisure activities in designated nations.

2.1.2. Definitions of hospitality

As mentioned formerly, the word ‘hospitality’ can generate rich ‘mental images’ depending on whether you are a recipient or a provider of its services (Ingram, 1999). For example the Oxford English Dictionary (1970: 405) defines hospitality as offering or affording welcome and entertainment to strangers or persons … of things, feelings, and qualities. The Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary, (1996: 424) defines hospitality as “the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers” and the Collins Concise English Dictionary (1995: 604) confirms this by defining hospitality as “kindness in welcoming strangers or guests”. Receivers of hospitality might imagine friendly social occasions enhanced by good food and drink and the warmth of the
welcome (Hall, 1995, 1998). In addition to these dictionaries, Beardsworth and Keil (1997) state that such hospitality would extend to travellers and that many societies had particularly strong culturally defined obligations to welcome strangers.

Cassee and Reuland (1983, p. xiv cited in Brotherton and Wood, 2000: 10) define hospitality as "a harmonious mixture of tangible and intangible components such as food, beverages, beds, ambience and environment, and behaviour of staff". Similarly to Cassee and Reuland (1983), Mullins (1992) contends that hospitality is much more about emphasising operations combining a productive and service element (intangible) than about emphasising products (tangible). It is suggested by Ingram (1999) that the operational characteristics of hospitality include:

- service; inter-personal, immediate and a major satisfier/dissatisfier;

- processes; planned and controlled by management, implemented by associates, sometimes erratically;

- information; about customers, competitors and trends is very important, but many hospitality firms have not worked out effective ways of information storage, retrieval and manipulation;

- work; long operational hours involve shifts and variable trade patterns can cause periodic pressures;

- functionality; tasks are predominantly organised into departments.

Adding to the variety of the hospitality industry definitions, the industry is often referred to as a 'people' industry in that it is characterised by labour intensity and because of its reliance on service rather than product differentiation for a competitive advantage (Adam and Maxwell, 1995). Brander-Brown and Harris (1995: 45) suggest that the "hospitality
industry has experienced significant paradigm shifts over the past decades". The concept of hospitality is neither a one-way process nor something exclusively behavioural in nature (Brotherton and Wood, 2000). One point which needs to be understood is the essence and the scope of hospitality, which involves the provision of food, refreshments and accommodation for those who are away from home (Telfer, 1996; Ingram, 1999; Brymer, 2000; Lashley, 2000; Angelo and Vladimir, 2001).

However, Knowles (1994) states that the scope of the hospitality industry is difficult to define, perhaps because of the lack of a conclusive definition of hospitality operators; for example, the guesthouse and bed and breakfast sector is a dynamic one in which operators may choose to sell spare rooms according to season and personal convenience.

Given the variety of hospitality definitions by authors, the definition of the hospitality industry may be best described by its work requirement characteristics (Mullins, 1992). Mullins (1992) describes certain characteristics of the hospitality industry work environment which may be used to give a better understanding of its distinctness as follows:

- skills; (a wide range of skills are required, but there are also high numbers of unskilled staff);

- staff; (may live on the premises, e.g., cottage, villa apartment, etc, often expected to work long hours and 'unsocial' hours and there is a large proportion of female, part-time, casual, and foreign staff; and labour turnover is generally high)

- salary; (many associates are under-paid; for example, in NSW, casual staff are paid $14.00 per hour and full time staff receive $15.50 per hour – Nosh Hospitality
Agency NSW, 2001. Under a new NSW pay rise package, 2002, the salary rate has now been increased to $18.00 per hour).

Further elaboration of the meaning of hospitality can be obtained from Brotherton and Wood (2000) in a more comprehensive review of the definition of hospitality. According to Brotherton and Wood (2000) 'hospitality' is associated with 'hospitaller' and 'host' (those who provide hospitality) and 'hospitalator' and 'guest' (those who are the recipients of hospitality). Hospitality also involves the provision of physical artefacts in the form of accommodation, food and/or drink. Hospitality, thus, is conceived of in terms of "the activities associated with the hospitality industry" (Brotherton and Wood, 2000: 136).

More recently, Lashley (2000: 3) attempts to capture all previous definitions and states that hospitality is "a contemporaneous exchange designed to enhance mutuality (well being) for the parties involved through the provision of food and/or drink, and/or accommodation".

It appears that the variety of hospitality definitions have been generated by scholars from the disciplines of philosophy, history and sociology (Beardsworth and Keil, 1997). Indeed, the diversity of such definitions has led to a divergence of classificatory systems (e.g., in the lodging industry), both official and academic, including those from the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) and the Hotel and Catering Industry Training Board (HCITB) who group activities according to the type of operation or the level of commerciality. This divergence that reflects the nature of the hospitality product, which is a complex amalgam of components, are difficult to identify and specify (Nankervis, 2000).

It can be argued, then, that the hospitality industry is concerned with providing services to its customers ('strangers') which, in part, can be seen as an economic activity that
consists of consumers and suppliers, and also market niches and occupations (Lashley, 2000). A wider understanding of hospitality, therefore, suggests that hospitality essentially a relationship between a host and a guest.

2.1.3 Tourism and the hotel sector

Today's tourism and the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, requires professional associates who are technically skilled, experienced and educated, and as stated earlier, the tourism and hospitality industry is now considered the number one industry in the world (Brymer, 2000; Spillane, 2001). The hospitality industry includes the hotel sector, motels, backpacker the hotel sector, bars, restaurants, fast food outlets, clubs, resorts, night clubs, casinos, institutional and government establishments, sporting venues and retail outlets and the market for hospitality goods and services in Australia is fuelled by its tourism industry. Australia's share of international tourism increased from 0.17% in 1950 to around 2% in the 1990s and the contribution of this activity to the national export earnings rose from A$211 million in 1973-1974 to A$16.32 billion in 1998 (Bushell, Prosser, Faulkner and Jafari, 2001). Growth in inbound tourism peaked at 15.5% per annum in 1994 and has since slowed as Australia's international competitiveness has weakened and outbound travel from Asian economies affected by financial crises has plummeted. Despite the current economic climate, Australia's low inflation performance and a marked depreciation of the Australian dollar relative to the U.S. and European currencies provide some cause for optimism (American Express, 1998 cited in Bushell et al., 2001). In addition, the tourism industry is Australia's biggest export earner, bringing in annually more than $11 billion worth of export earnings and over four and a half million visitors a year (the industry sector analysis, New York, 27 April 1998).
The tourism and hospitality industry also contributes to the American economy (Farmer, 1996); for example, in 1997, the Travel Industry of America Association reported that there were 1.256 billion person trips by U.S. residents (Minic, 1998 cited in Brymer, 2000). In Australia, in the financial year 1995/96, the tourism industry accounted for around 7.5 per cent of Australia’s GDP, and was responsible for the direct employment of some 700,000 people and indirectly for another 330,000 and indeed, international tourism in Australia generated export earning of A$15.5 billion in the financial year 1996/97 (Mazetelli, 1999). The Australian federal government will boost funding for a tourism campaign encouraging Australians to go on holiday within the country. The government is allocating an extra $8 million over four years to advertise holidays within Australia as part of the ‘See Australia’ campaign and this can generate ‘injection money’ for the local community (the Sunday Telegraph, 5 May 2002).

In addition, as part of the ‘See Australia’ campaign, the federal government is about to launch a third Australian carrier to replace the ‘vacuum routes’ created by the collapse of Ansett (the SMH, 3 June 2002). Given the evidence of the contribution made by tourism, it is also interesting to find out how tourism and the hospitality industry influences the economies of Asia Pacific countries. Some Asia Pacific countries are now showing economic recovery, particularly, the Pacific countries that are forecast to grow by 1.9 percent in 2002 and 2.6 percent in 2003, compared to a 0.8 percent contraction in 2001. Papua New Guinea (PNG) will emerge from recession into low growth due to modest improvements in agriculture. PNG gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to be 1.2 percent in 2002 and 1.8 percent in 2003 (Asian Development Outlook /ADO, 2002 cited in The Press Wire 9 April 2002). The tourism industry has also contributed to GDP for some Pacific countries; for example, the Fiji islands growth in GDP is projected to pick up from 3.5 percent in 2002 to 4.7 percent in 2003, The Cook Islands enjoyed
moderate growth in 2001 and 2002, Vanuatu will post a growth of 0.7 percent in 2002 and 1.9 percent in 2003, Vanuatu’s GDP is likely to grow 0.7 percent in 2002 and 1.9 percent in 2003 (the press wire, 9 April 2002). With the growth of demand in Asia and Pacific, many countries in the region are now developing and aggressively marketing their own tourism industries. Therefore, while on the one hand Australia is poised to capitalise on its geographically advantageous position, on the other hand, this country's tourism product will be confronted by more intensive competition from other destinations within the region (Bushell et al., 2001). However, according to the Asian Development Bank – ADB– (18 April 2002), September 11 caused Asian developing countries' tourism to increase by only 1.7% in 2001 compared with 8.2% in 2000. The Solomon Islands and Vanuatu both suffered negative growth in 2001 because of ethnic unrest and the latter because of cyclone damage to agricultural production (The Press Wire, 9 April 2002). In addition, inflation, terrorism, recession, war, political upheaval, global airline restructuring and the continued advancement of technology are also influencing the industry's performance. While some of these affected the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, hotel's managers might reasonably be expected to learn from the past and think ahead so as to ensure that their companies are better equipped to face similar uncertain environment in the future (Costa, Eccles and Teare, 1996).

As stated previously, it appears that the continuity of the tourism and hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, depends upon global economic stability and political steadiness. In spite of its dependency on an unpredictable external environment, tourism and the hospitality industry share a similar reliance on each other. This 'mutually exclusive' business is closely interwoven and can work together. The following figure shows how service tourism and hospitality is connected.
Figure 1  The service tourism and hospitality connection

The economy
Agriculture  Government  Manufacturing  Service

The service sector
Financial firms  Healthcare  Realty firms  Telecommunications

The tourism industry
Entertainment  Hospitality (food service and lodging)  Transportation

The hospitality industry

Food service

Restaurants
Fine dining  Full service  Cafeteria  Buffet  Fast food  Carry-out

Lodging
Full dining room  Informal dining room  Banquets  Room service  Snack bars

Non-commercial
Airlines  Business and industry  College and school  Healthcare  Concessions  Correctional  Military

Catering
On premises  Off premises  Clubs  Country club  City club  Health club

Lodging

Luxury hotel  Mid priced hotel  Budget motel  Resort  Upscale hotel  Economy hotel  Bed and breakfast  All-suite

Non-commercial housing  Condominium hotel

The tourism and hospitality industry falls into four broad economic sectors: agriculture (food service), government, manufacturing and service. The government is directly and indirectly involved in the hospitality industry as it seeks to build tourism for its respective communities. Manufacturing produces tangible products, supplies equipments, and furniture. Agriculture, government and manufacturing are forces that make important economic contributions to the industry. On the other hand, the service industry focuses on a service that is an intangible product. According to Kotler and Armstrong (1997), a service is any activity or benefit that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible. In addition, James and Fitzsimmons (1994 cited in Brymer, 2000) state that the most important aspect of services and the economy is that as an economy develops, services become more important and a vast number of the population becomes employed in service activities. The traveller also utilises services, such as telephones at a hotel and the hotel itself provides many services such as a comfortable environment, luggage handling, and fax machines. Travellers must eat and they purchase from a restaurant. Restaurants provide other services such as table service, cleaning service, and atmosphere. Even those travelling by car will require the services of a highway that is safe, efficient and well maintained. This illustrates that when people travel they utilise the services of the tourism industry. Tourism, therefore, is a segment of the service sector.

In line with tourism, the hospitality industry usually consists of food service, lodging and clubs (see Figure 1) which require service operations too. If the hospitality industry primarily refers to food service and lodging operations, then it is obvious that the hospitality industry must be considered a segment of the tourism industry. Hospitality is a part of tourism and tourism is a part of service. These three unique areas, service, tourism and hospitality, are connected to each other in very special ways. Their
relationship is integrated by the very nature of their existence; that is, to provide hospitality that travellers need and to ensure that the necessary services are available. Each plays a very important role in the development of this growing industry. According to Bull (1995: 8) the interdependence of the hospitality and other tourism sectors is well illustrated by the following observation: “a shortage of supply of accommodation at a destination can lead to a curtailment (a reduction even) in the demand for airline travel but airlines are reluctant to pioneer new routes whilst other infrastructure (e.g. airports and the hotel sector) is absent and developers are also reluctant to invest until there is some assurance of a steady flow of visitors”. Elliot (1997: 110) supports Bull’s observation by saying “interdependence is the basis for management in the hospitality and other tourism sectors, for none of the industry community can survive without the others”.

Bull’s observation exemplifies the strengths and weaknesses of the interdependence of the industries, and illustrates the importance of the public sector, especially in the provision of appropriate tourism infrastructure (e.g. roads, domestic transportation systems, electricity and water services). As Nankervis (2000: 21) states, “the tourism industry is almost uniquely dependent on the services and support of its national governments”. Elmonts (1995: 57 – 63) has highlighted criteria that would help a tourism and the hospitality industry flourish such as “upgrading training for local citizens, developing direct financial incentives for business, providing tax incentives, promoting stable operating conditions, being more sensitive to local conditions, improving local infrastructure, expanding tourism development, diminishing the importance of seasonality, protecting the environment and protecting tourists”. As indicated by Brymer (2000: 15) “successful tourism and a successful of the hospitality industry, then require a
mesh of popular activities with an assessment of development opportunities within the spectrum of tourism and the hospitality industry”.

Nankervis (2000: 60) points out that, due to environmental changes “international hotel chains (e.g. Accor, a French company) have sought to capture all segments of the tourism market by developing ‘multi-tier’ chain brands, for example: Accor’s portfolio includes the Sofitel-Pullman, Novotel, Mercure-Altea, and Ibis-Arcade”. Consequently, Nankervis (2000: 61) states, “the effect of this development has been to allow individual hotels or chains to operate outside the traditional constraints of the star grading system, more responsive to changing guest expectations and posing a threat to the comfortable industry structure of the past”. It also has led to the recognition by hotel operators that they need to form ‘strategic alliances and strategic partnerships’ with their former competitors in order to survive and prosper, for example, vertical integration, horizontal integration, diversification, or merely alliances for market penetration, marketing, sharing resources and technology (Selin, 1993; Go and Pine, 1995; Tribe, 1997; Contractor and Kundu, 1998 cited in Nankervis, 2000; Brymer, 2000; Crotts et al., 2000; Olsen, 2001).

Strategic alliances and strategic partnerships in the tourism and hospitality industry will promote the tourism industry and hotel sector as key players in stimulating economic development (Brymer, 2000; Crotts et al., 2000; Crockett, 2002). Furthermore, these strategic alliances and strategic partnerships need to occur in areas where both industry and government are willing to contribute (Lickorish and Jenkins, 1999; Nankervis, 2000; Brymer, 2000; Crotts et al., 2000). These are partnerships which can be run with relatively few overheads and substantially more marketing impact and, as in any business, they should be judged on the returns generated by investment (Farmer, 1996).
As Bennet and O’Brien (1994) state, rapidly evolving technology, and increasing global competition, as well as a more diverse in workforce are changing the requirements of the tourism industry and hotel sector which want to remain competitive to learn more and learn it faster.

The future of tourism and the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, is bright and the wants and needs of the travellers to obtain quality service is high. Thus training is needed to support associates in providing outstanding customer service as well as for specialisation and an understanding of evolving technology (Boulard, 2000).

2.2. Training for front line associates in the hotel sector

The hotel sector is characterised by paying attention to details and training is expected to support front line associates to get their job done well. To be successful in the hotel sector, managers need to constantly review and know what customers are looking for and try to meet those needs and expectations (Nisky, 2001). In addition, the hotel sector is now becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of knowledge, and of learning, to the entire enterprise (Leavitt, 2001).

Nowadays, the hospitality industry appears to be facing increasing competitive pressures to improve the quality of its delivery of products and services. One mechanism for improving quality is through improvements in the technical skills of the associates delivering the products and services (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990). To develop these technical skills, organisations have moved away from unstructured, on-the-job training systems to more formal, structured training programs (Rosow and Zager, 1988 cited in Ford et al., 1992). For many, in the hotel sector “success depends largely on the availability of qualified associates who are able to ‘translate’ and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service” (Putra, 2002b: 1). Putra (2002b: 1)
also states that "unqualified associates' failures to deliver consistently high quality service could put a hotel's reputation and long-term competitiveness at risk".

For many travellers, the quality of service is seen as a criterion by which to judge good or bad service (Rowe, 1998). Even though it is intangible, associates must be given the tools to do their job, whether that means knowledge about the product, the ability to address complaints immediately or the skills to deliver outstanding service. One of the most common tools used to support associates to provide quality service is training (Melia, 1992; Gritz, 1993; Deery, 1999; Hertig, 2001; Hogan, 2001). Thus, hotel companies must take training programs for front line associates seriously to accommodate the growing pressure to provide qualified associates.

As stated previously, the hotel sector depends upon its associates providing customer satisfaction and a competitive edge, thus employing adequately trained associates in the industry is becoming important to the maintenance of high levels of professionalism and high standards of service. In the hotel sector some new associates may be employed who have the knowledge and skills required to start work. Others may have need of extensive training before they are ready to make a contribution to the organisation. While training might be accomplished on an informal basis, better results are arguably achievable through a well-organised, formal training program or on the job development-training program (Schupp, 1997; Deery, 1999; Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002).

According to the various literature, training means different things to different people. It might simply mean reading a manual, or it might mean learning new skills for a specific job, or it might mean that someone is assigned to accomplish a particular task by
learning from others. In general, Hertig (2001: 64) defines training as "an ongoing process to improve a job incumbent's knowledge, skills and abilities".

The terms 'specific training' and 'general training' have arisen from Becker's (1964 cited in Deery, 1999) *Human Capital*. Specific training is identified as "training that has no effect on the productivity of trainees that would be useful in other firms" (Becker 1964 cited in Deery, 1999: 18). This specific training focuses on the importance of the specific job and the particular technology used in the job (Deery, 1999). Skills specificity increases the amount of training cost of the employer rather than the costs of the employee who is being paid at the time of training. Specific training increases the absolute level of such costs, in that the skills are less relevant in other firms. On the other hand, general training can be defined as any method used by an organisation to enhance learning by its individual members (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002).

On the job training (OJT) appears to be becoming very important for the workplace of the future because it is highly effective, cheap, flexible and easy to implement in an organisation (Rothwell and Kazanas, 1995; Schupp, 1997). Because it tends to be informal, it can occur through observation, experience and through working up the promotional ladder (Schupp, 1997; Deery, 1999). Nankervis and Compton (1989: 39) define on the job training as:

"that which takes place at the normal work position of the trainee ... where a manager or supervisor spends a significant amount of time with trainees in order to teach a set of specific new skills that have been specified in advance and which include periods of instruction where there may be little or no useful output in terms of products or services".

Clark (1994 cited in Schupp, 1997) also proposes that the OJT is conducted while the employee is working on the job and it usually involves a supervisor and/or instructor
coaching the employee while he/she performs job tasks. The supervisor demonstrates tasks and assists the employee to overcome any difficulties. Clark (1994 cited in Schupp, 1997: 8) states that OJT has several vital components as follows:

- **Providing experience for associates;**
- **Encouraging productivity while learning on the job;**
- **Having a high level of realism and enabling the supervisor and the employee to develop a good working relationship.**

However, Myers (1986 cited in Schupp, 1997: 9) states that “OJT is not as effective as many authors claim and can often turn out to be expensive and time consuming especially for small hotels”. There will always be a need for external courses. But, Myers (cited in Schupp, 1997: 9) points out that if OJT is to “increase in popularity it needs to be used in conjunction with better learning materials such as more user-friendly manuals”. Regardless of the negative views of OJT, it appears to be one of the most effective means of facilitating workplace learning (Rothwel and Kazanas, 1995).

In the hotel sector, the main objective of training programs at the beginning of an individual’s employment is to foster to a satisfactory level the knowledge and skills needed to achieve effective performance (Putra, 2002b). As an individual continues on the job, training provides opportunities to obtain new knowledge and skills (Nankervis et al., 1999 and Nankervis et al., 2002). As a result of the training, the individual may then be more effective on the job and may qualify for jobs at a higher level.

One measure of training in Australia is the patterns of employers’ training expenditure on training. Table 1 shows the components of training expenditure.
Table 1  Training expenditure in all industries and sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Actual ($million)</th>
<th>Proportion (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee’s wages and salaries for time receiving training</td>
<td>549.2</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of wages and salaries of in-house trainers</td>
<td>271.9</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees paid to consultants and institutions</td>
<td>204.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other expenditure (training material, equipment, etc.)</td>
<td>143.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total training expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,178.8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Employers in Australia spent $1,178.8 million on training during the 1996 September quarter. Some 47% of the total expenditure on training by employers was for the wages and salaries of their associates for the time they were receiving structured training. The cost of paying fees to trainers accounted for a further 40% of the total spent by employers on training. The remaining 13% of the total cost of training met by employers was for other items such as training equipment and materials.

In addition, a single measure of training within the hotel sector is the expenditure of employers on training. According to ABS (see Table 2), employers in the category of accommodations, cafes and restaurants spend far less as a percentage of gross wages and salaries on training than those employers in other sectors of the tourism and service industries and against ‘the all industries’ category.
Table 2  Average training expenditure in the tourism industry and hotel sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Gross wages and salaries:</th>
<th>Expenditure per employee:</th>
<th>Training per employee:</th>
<th>Total training expenditure:</th>
<th>Employers providing training: %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>$m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>88.11</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>14.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations, cafes and restaurants</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>54.51</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>10.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and recreational services</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>103.09</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and other services</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>298.54</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>21.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All industries</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>185.49</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1178.8</td>
<td>17.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The amount of training expenditure per employee is significantly less than the expenditure per employee in other categories. What the data do not take into consideration is the amount of time spent on informal or on the job training and it is possible that associates in accommodation, cafes and restaurants, while still receiving less training than associates in other categories may receive more on the job training which is not accounted for in these statistics. However, whether or not this is the case, hotel associates probably receive less training than any other industry associates.

The industry commission report (1996 cited in Deery, 1999) into training in the tourism accommodation sector found that between 50%-70% of training in the hotel sector was achieved thorough on-the-job training, the exception of this being the training for chefs which was completed through formal training. The main type of training in the hospitality industry (e.g., the hotel sector) therefore, seems to be that of informal, on the job training; in other words the training is likely to be both firm specific and at the employer's
expense. Charlesworth (1994 cited in Deery, 1999) argues the employers view on-the-job training as crucial, or perhaps simply cheaper. Charlesworth (1994 cited in Deery, 1999) also argues that one of the reasons for the high rate of turnover within the hospitality industry is due to the fact that the skills are overwhelmingly accrued through experience rather than formal education. Deery (1999) indicates from her own study that associates received higher wages for years spent with their current employer, suggesting that tourism related employers value experience and firm specific skills rather than general training and qualifications.

It is obvious then from the following Table 3, that on-the-job training is generally the preferred method of training in the hotel sector particularly in the Australian hotel industry, with the exception of chefs who are still trained under the apprenticeship system. This preference for on-the-job training is confirmed by the US study by Conrade, Woods and Ninemeier (1994) in which they found a preference for on-the-job training in a lodging industry almost 70% more often than more formal methods. The studies by Conrade et al., (1994) and Breiter and Woods (1997) argue that for the hotel sector, on-the-job training is seen to be very cost effective and is argued to be a labour cost rather than a training cost.
Table 3  Training by the type and employment category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal training %</td>
<td>Informal on the job training only %</td>
<td>No training</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time and part time staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front office/receptions</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chefs</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other food and beverage</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual staff</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3 shows that a high proportion of people in management positions do not have qualifications whereas casual staff predominantly rely upon informal on the job training. In Australia, changes in employment arrangements and patterns have been substantial over the past fifteen years. In 1998, 27 percent of Australians were casually employed, compared with 19 percent in 1988 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998 cited in Lowry et al., 2002). It has been widely assumed that Australian casual associates were short-term associates – their tenure is just over three years – for both men and women (VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1999 cited in Lowry et al., 2002). Permanent or core workers, on the other hand, are employed on an ongoing basis, and the relationship may continue indefinitely. As Garsten (1999) suggests, the use of casual associates has benefits for both the organisation and the employee. Clearly, for the employer, peripheral staffing arrangements represent huge long-term cost savings and play a vital role by allowing ‘just-in-time’ staffing during times of peak demand. For the casual employee,
there is the lifestyle issue, the freedom to choose when and where to work, and, for some, the prospect of a permanent position. Despite the perceived advantages of casual work, permanent staff enjoy the benefits of training, greater job security, and promotional prospects, whereas casual staff face less continuity and receive relatively few organisational benefits (Campbell, 1996; Campbell and Burgess, 1997). The inference from this trend, therefore, is that, formal training, informal on-the-job training appears to remain the predominant training method for the hotel sector.

Given the variety of training types in the hotel sector, however, most organisations appear to be using a ‘traditional approach’ to training activities which consists of the assessment of training needs, the use of training methods to deliver content based on needs, and finally a comprehensive evaluation of the program using several different evaluation criteria and strategies (Tracey and Tews, 1995).

The concept of a ‘traditional approach’ to training has now been refined particularly in the area of the assessment of training needs (Putra, 2002b); for example, Nankervis et al., (1999) and Nankervis et al., (2002) state that in order to approach training needs more systematically, three different analyses are required. These are organisational analysis, task analysis, and person analysis. From a thorough needs analysis, then, managers can develop the learning objectives of such programs. After this, managers can select and design the most appropriate methods to deliver training. Once the needs assessment has been completed, the next step is to conduct the training programs and establish criteria which can be achieved via a needs assessment. A thorough assessment also identifies non-training issues that should be addressed before one evaluating the program. After the training program is completed, evaluation is undertaken to determine its effectiveness. This view is supported by Machles (2002) who stated that to ensure success with training, the need for training must be clearly
identified and this can be achieved via a needs assessment. A thorough assessment also identifies non-training issues that should be addressed before training is initiated. Once needs are identified, clear objectives must be developed which describe what the learner will do, state the conditions under which they will do it, and establish criteria by which successful performance will be judged.

Smith and Cooper (2000) state that it is now time to shift from concern with the elements of the training programs, i.e., needs assessment, training methods and evaluation, to more concerned with a focus on the delivery of the training, particularly on relating the training to the program objectives, and closely matching training situations to work situations. They emphasize the interactive relationships between these aspects of training programs.

As stated by Herman and Eller (1991: 56) training for front line associates in the hotel sector is expected to help enable the industry to “recruit and retain associates who are capable of delivering consistent, good service, as well as promptly, intelligently, courteously, and enthusiastically”. There are certain areas that need to be considered for training of front line staff prior to conducting training programs.

2.2.1 Prior to conducting training programs

Some contextual elements need to be considered prior to conducting training programs for front line associates. These are employment practices which are not commonly considered to be a part of a full training program, but which can be argued to fulfil some training functions (Putra, 2000b).
Definition of contextual training elements

Contextual teaching and learning is a pedagogical model that encourages teaching that is connected to real-world experiences outside of the classroom (Hayes, 1993; Granello, 2000). This approach acknowledges that people learn in a variety of contexts and from a variety of situations (Frisby, 1998). In this view, teachers become participants along with the learners in the process of shared cognition or of constructing meaning in a given situation (Mayer, 1998).

Contextual teaching and learning has many definitions, each of which is drawn from a different perspective; for example, Cunningham (1995 cited in Putra, 2002b: 6) states that “contextual teaching and learning is a process that varies across work situations and is not static”. Granello (2000: 270) defines contextual teaching and learning as “an important pedagogical tool that can be applied in an educational environment and which provides a theoretical rationale for many teaching and learning interventions”.

In contrast, in a contextual approach to training, learning is “attached to the context in which the knowledge is constructed and knowledge is seen as inseparable from the context and activities within which it develops” (Mayer, 1998 cited in Granello, 2000: 270). In this view (Resnick, 1991 cited in Granello, 2000: 271) stated the most important aspect of any contextual training situation is “the physical (environmental) and social context within which the learning occurs”.

In line with the definition of contextual training elements as stated by Granello (2000), it can be said that matching training situations to work situations is a physical element. The delivery of the training is the social context within which the learning occurs and program objectives are an integral part of the learning activity.
As previously mentioned, the contextual elements are employment practices which frequently are not considered to be a part of a full training program, but which can be argued to fulfil some training functions (Putra, 2002b).

**Induction**

Nankervis et al., (1999: 305) define induction “as the formal process of familiarising new associates to the organisation, their job, and the work unit”. Induction provides new associates with an understanding of how job performance contributes to the success of the organisation and how the services or products of the organisation can contribute to society. In addition, induction-training programs explain to new staff what the subsequent training programs will be about (Hogan, 2001). Furthermore, induction sessions should be supplemented with a packet of materials that new associates are able to read at their leisure (Nankervis et al., 1999). Some materials that a packet might include are shown in Appendix 1.

**Service/products**

A full service hotel can have many departments and dozens of services. To enable new associates to work collaboratively for the good of the company, information to new associates about the many departments and services can involve an explanation of the company’s philosophy (Hogan, 2001).

**General procedures**

Procedures manuals must give precise explanations and it must be ensured that the front line associates can fully comprehend them (Hogan, 2001).
Cooperative endeavour

As suggested by Nankervis et al., (1999) and Nankervis et al., (2002) this describes organisational directions, which can be explained through combinations of conditions of employment, pay and benefits. Hogan (2001) adds some other essential elements such as dress code, the chain of communication, policies, job safety, recognition programs and security procedures, which can also illuminate organisational directions.

All of the above can help explain important aspects of an organisation to associates. As a consequence, their understanding of the organisation’s philosophy, directions and procedural standards may improve. Similarly, Hertig (2001) describes how the above usual elements can be treated altogether during initial orientation training; here new associates get in-depth exposure to the dominant culture of the employer in this situation (the first introduction should be strategically placed into the recruitment stage). The employer must provide as solid a foundation as possible during this stage, which serves both to prepare the employee for job challenges and to signify to an employee his/her importance to management.

Such preparation is doubly important for protection officers, as they are the ‘preservers of the corporate culture’ (Hertig, 2001). Obviously, they must be aware intimately of what they are trying to protect. Security personnel are also ‘management representatives’ and ‘legal consultants’; roles which demand a highly developed sense of structure, function and culture in the work environment. The list of documents that management should send to newly hired persons can be seen from Appendix 2 for further details.
2.2.2 Conducting training programs

The need for employee training is acknowledged almost universally (Knight and Salter, 1985; Mesa, 1999; Sullivan, 2000; Westbrook, 2001; Walsh, 2001). Hoffman (2001) the president of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers argues that effective training provides a competitive advantage for the organisation. Berta (2001) defines effective training as relating to the organisations’ long term goals, which include maintaining the organisations’ quality of service and providing career development for associates. Hogan (2001: 1) states, “most hoteliers today realise that while technology plays a growing role in the hospitality industry, the people or personnel side of the business inevitably determines the long-term success”. It appears that training for front line associates remains essential to conveying service quality and so to surviving in today’s environment.

The purpose of a training program is then to achieve the overall organisational objectives (Nankervis et al., 1999 and Nankervis et al., 2002) and at the same time an effective training program should contribute to the satisfaction of the trainees’ personal goals (Cooke, 2000) and organisational bottom lines (Holton III, 1996). The following are some elements that need to be included in the development and implementation of training programs:

One: Goals

Knight and Salter (1985) suggest that the first step of any training program should be to explain its goals to the participants. The reason for this is that goals provide direction and motivation. In addition, Knight and Salter also emphasise the importance of using precise words which are easy to comprehend and also measurable when explaining the goals.
Two: Skills and knowledge

The primary intention of training programs is to foster to a satisfactory level, acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance. As the individual continues on the job, training then provides opportunities to acquire more knowledge and skills (Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002), which can further improve job performance. The skills and knowledge to be developed must be immediately relevant and applicable to the workplace (Smith and Cooper, 2000).

Three: Learning experiences

The achievement of a job-training program relies on more than the recognition of training needs and the preparation of the program. Nankervis et al., (1999) and Nankervis et al., (2002) state that in order to maximise the learning of the front line associates, careful consideration needs to be given to the relevant principles of learning to be incorporated into the training.

Four: Learning transfer

The effectiveness of training programs is essential for managers who need to ensure that trainees apply the learning gained from training to their work situations (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980; Noe, 1986; Holton III, Bates, Seyler and Carvalho, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998). Transfer strategies can be classified as those involving managers, trainers and associates and those implemented before, during and after training (Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Machles, 2002).

The ultimate goal of conducting training for front line associates is increasing understanding and the ability to apply knowledge learned on the job to transfer training from concept to practice.
Noe et al., (2000: 226) define transfer of training as “the use of knowledge, skills, and behaviours learned in training on the job”. Similarly, Machles (2002: 32) defines training transfer as “the process of successfully moving knowledge, skills or attitudes from classroom to workplace, which is the ultimate goal of training”. Furthermore, Machles (2002: 34) proposes some key strategies for increasing training transfer as follows:

- “Use realistic examples of how the skill might be used,
- Give learners meaningful contexts for the application of concepts rather than presenting theory without useful association,
- Use rich analogies to heighten retention of information,
- Present skills in a conceptual context before asking learners to use them,
- Include practice of skills in the design of the learning event,
- Present new concepts in several different ways,
- Use clear and effective visual aids,
- Consider the use of pretraining assignments,
- Keep concepts and skills as close as possible to the work generally performed by participants,
- Build in post-training follow up with participants,
- Encourage the organisation to develop supportive environments for continued,
- Learning in the workplace after training has taken place”

The importance of using realistic examples and effective visual aids, practice of skills, keeping concepts and skills as close as possible to the workplace, developing a supportive environment and learning after training appear to be particularly important for front line associates in the hotel sector. These training strategies can be categorised as aspects of on the job training (OJT) programs. Clark (1994: 363 cited in Schupp, 1997: 41)
states, "OJT is conducted while the associate is working on the job and it usually involves a supervisor or trainer coaching the associate while he/she performs job tasks by demonstrating tasks and assisting the associate to overcome any difficulties". Rothwell and Kazanas (1995) argue that job skills and abilities must be acquired by actual practice and experience while on the job.

However, Jackson and Schuler (2000) argue that training activities do not always occur on the job (OJT), but can be conducted as on site training or in training rooms when a small number of individuals are involved. They argue that the important aspect of on site training or training in a room is that managers and/or trainers use realistic examples and/or effective visual aids such as use of videotapes, videodisks and interactive video training. For on site training, managers and/or trainers need to use practical examples with trainees to ensure they understand and know how to apply skills in their jobs.

As previously stated by Smith and Cooper (2000) closely matching training situations to work situations is imperative in enhancing transfer of training. Likewise, studies by Rouiller and Goldstein (1993); Kirkpatrick (1998); Bennet, Lehman and Forst (1999); Noe et al., (2000); Jackson and Schuler (2000); Yamnill and McLean (2001); Hirsch (2001) highlight the importance of supportive work environments in helping trainees to transfer training to their workplaces.

The idea of learning after training is similar to the concept of lifelong learning (Chambers, 2002). Chambers (2002: 33) states "lifelong learning is not just training people, but teaching them how to learn for themselves and recognising that learning can occur anywhere on the job, not just in the training room".

In the highly competitive hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, training transfer is regarded as a crucial element of training programs, the ultimate goal of which
is almost always improved service to customers. To provide superior levels of customer service, management expectations of employee performance are becoming increasingly complex and demanding (Lowry et al., 2002). For instance, working in the hotel sector typically entails direct and frequent contact with customers. As well as the mental and physical aspects of the task, this type of interaction demands emotional behaviours, the emotional labour ‘where an explicit part of the job is to display a particular set of emotions’ (Garsten, 1999). Thus, being a ‘satisfactory task performer’ (Campbell, 2000) is no longer sufficient, and the ability to demonstrate high levels of customer service clearly requires commitment. One way the organisation may attempt to gain commitment is to emphasise employee empowerment (Hing, 1998).

Lashley (1996, 2001) contends that empowered associates will respond to customer needs as they arise. From his viewpoint, they will react appropriately to customer complaints and develop a sense of ownership, taking personal pride in ensuring that service encounters are a success. Empowerment has been described as a means to enable associates to make decisions (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Lashley, 2001) and as a personal phenomenon where individuals take responsibility for their own actions (Pastor, 1996). The first definition relates to how management facilitates and implements the empowerment culture, while the second emphasises the importance of the individual in the truly successful application of empowerment (Pastor, 1996).

Whatever the definition of empowerment used, the end goal is to develop the performance and potential of the individual as well as that of the organisation (Bowen and Lawler, 1992; Long, 1996; Forrester, 2000; Lashley, 2001). For instance, associates may assist co-workers who have heavier than normal workloads, intervene in problems with other staff before they occur, or offer new suggestions for work practices. In this way, empowered associates contribute to the organisation’s overall performance by
being more efficient and resourceful, providing better service and, ultimately, making the organisation more profitable (Lashley, 2001).

It appears that the success of training programs in the hotel sector can be determined by the degree to which the programs offered closely match the work environment; the trainees apply learning learned to the workplaces; the trainees have full encouragement from managers and supervisor; and the emphasis in training on empowerment. This view is, in part, supported by Corsun and Enz (1999) and Lashley (2001) who state that greater emphasis on empowerment is likely to deliver improved performance outcomes. Therefore, conducting training for front line staff in the hotel sector is a fundamental of the hospitality industry and it is part of a system of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices designed to achieve maximum potential and performance from associates (Nankervis et al., 1999; Deery, 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002).

2.3. Human resource management in the hotel sector

Increased competition in both national and global arenas has forced managers to reconsider the management of all resources within the organization, paying specific attention to the effective management of the human resource, leading to declarations such as ‘people are our most valuable asset’ (Biswa and Cassell, 1996). The shift from traditional personnel management towards a more sophisticated human resource management has been reported extensively in recent years (Storey, 1989; Legge, 1989; Guest, 1989). Guest (1989) identifies the central levers for HRM as selection, training and rewards. As Goss (1994) considers, however, that the main features of a human resource management network include additional features such as welfare, trade unions, assessment, employee involvement and equal opportunities. A further and essential feature of the HR practices is that it is intended to be strategic in nature. Sophisticated
human resource management practice stipulates that in order to be effective the HR activities of an organisation must be linked to an overall corporate strategy (Nankervis et al., 1999 and Nankervis et al., 2002) and that the business direction of the organisation must be reflected and supported by the HRM techniques adopted (Biswa and Cassell, 1996).

Before discussing human resource strategies in the hotel sector it is useful to offer an insight into the unique characteristics shared by service industries. Sasser, Olsen, Wyckoff (1978 cited in Biswas and Cassell, 1996: 19) describe four main characteristics which render the sector as fundamentally different from manufacturing industries, namely "simultaneity; heterogeneity; intangibility; and perishability". According to Sasser et al., (1978 cited in Biswas and Cassell, 1996: 19) simultaneity refers to "production and consumption of services; clearly these occur simultaneously"; for example, a meal in a restaurant is consumed as part of the process of the whole event, immediately after it has been prepared and while the consumer and producer are in close proximity, unlike manufacturing where the producer may be thousands of miles from the consumer. As said by Sasser et al., (1978 cited in Biswas and Cassell, 1996: 19) heterogeneity describes "the way in which the hotel sector and restaurants aim to reproduce the same quality of service each time but in actual fact this can vary substantially from establishment to establishment and from day to day because of the variables, e.g. staff attitude, mood, and work atmosphere". Sasser et al., (1978 cited in Biswas and Cassell, 1996); Hall (1995, 1998); Rowe (1998) argue that services are intangible; therefore the quality of the service is indefinable and will vary from consumer to consumer depending on their experiences, perceptions and expectations. As stated by Sasser et al., (1978 cited in Biswas and Cassell, 1996: 19) perishability indicates that "services have a definite lifespan and cannot be stored". They gave an example whereby if a hotel has
100 bedrooms and on any given night sells only 90 rooms, those ten bedrooms that remain unsold are ‘lost sales’ as they can never be sold again at a later date. According to Biswas and Cassell (1996), taking these four factors into consideration it becomes clear that the role of the employee in the service process is vital. The employee is the service provider; therefore “the HR strategy is clearly of great importance in terms of securing the operational success of the organisation” (Biswas and Cassell, 1996: 19).

The labour market features of the hotel sector are also significant (Riley, 1991). In addition, Riley (1991: 15) describes such features include “a fairly large proportion of unskilled labour; the transferability of skills between broad ranges of hotel and catering establishments; high levels of labour turnover; absenteeism; and low levels of pay”. Clearly any human resource management strategy must focus on the here and now because of the transient nature of the labour force and indeed the added unpredictability of business within the service sector. As Riley (1991); Whittington (1993); and Legge (1995) identify, the hotel sector relies on employing ‘types’ of associates to ‘fit in’ with the organisation.

As stated earlier, service in the hotel sector can be tangible and intangible. The relationship between tangibles and intangibles as sources of customer satisfaction is an influential factor in determining the employment strategies which a firm uses and the form which HRM takes. As the significance of the intangible element increases, the need to gain employee commitment in ‘delighting the customer’ as a result of training program increases, and the amount of discretion accorded to the employee also increases (Lashley, 1998); Lashley (1998); Storey, Ackers, Bacon, Buchanan, Coates and Preston (1994 cited in Worsfold, 1999); and Worsfold (1999) state that HRM in hospitality organisations stresses the broad choices open to management as being between concerns for controlling labour as a resource (hard) and gaining greater commitment
from associates in increasingly competitive situations (soft). The importance of HRM in the hotel sector is thus concerned with control and commitment; for examples, given the nature of most service encounters within hospitality organisations, employee commitment to successful encounters that stress the importance of ‘delighting the customer’ and maintaining the integrity of a branded concept, associates need to provide customer service within controls set by the organisation (Lashley, 1998). In order to ‘delight the customer’ thus HRM persons need to use the skills required of front-line associates provided through training that is in line with organisational business objectives (Kelliher and Johnson, 1997).

An important role of HRM (in the area of service quality) is that HR practices in the hotel sector are integrated with its business strategy (Worsfold, 1999). It is self evident, that in terms of service quality the behaviour of the service provider is of paramount importance (Samenfink, 1994; Sparks, 1994; Mohr and Bitner, 1995) and customer perceptions of satisfactory service have been shown to be directly influenced by the behaviour of service providers which, in turn, appear to be influenced by HRM (Worsfold, 1999). A study by Peccei and Rosenthal (1998: 66 – 86) supports the importance of the HRM role in the hotel sector and states “there is a clear link between commitment to customer service (the hotel sector) and the employee capacity variables of employee knowledge and competence (the behaviour of service provider, e.g. front line staff), thereby suggesting the importance of recruitment, selection, induction, socialisation, and training (HRM function)”.

It can be argued that regardless of the importance of the HRM role in the hotel sector, particularly in the area of recruiting and training, the hotel sector appears to invest huge amounts of money in training. As Melia (1992: 38) stated, “training for front line associates is necessary in the hospitality industry”, however, questions have been raised
as to whether the money is being spent wisely. As previously stated, there has been an increased interest in the evaluation of training programs on the part of both academics and practitioners (Faerman and Ban, 1993). Indeed, both academics and practitioners have argued that little attention is given to efforts to assess whether training participants actually transfer what they learn in the classroom to the actual work environment (Faerman and Ban, 1993; Mbawo, 1995). Lewis and Thornhill (1994: 25) for example, said “while millions of dollars are spent on training there is little empirical evidence linking training to improved job performance”. Furthermore, Newstorm (1986 cited in Faerman and Ban, 1993: 299) stated “too much money and attention are spent on the design and delivery of programs and not enough on efforts to increase the transfer of training to the work environment”. As stated by Faerman and Ban (1993: 300) these have led to “increased interest in the evaluation of training programs for front line associates on the part of both academics and practitioners”. Therefore, research needs to be carried out to investigate the effectiveness of training programs in the hospitality industry for front line associates.

For years, training practitioners have relied on various applications of Donald Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model (1959 – 1998), also known as the four-level evaluation model as a basic framework for identifying the different outcomes of training (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Faerman and Ban, 1993; Holton III, 1996; Rowden, 2001). The next chapter discusses Kirkpatrick’s model and its problems and/or issues surrounding it.
CONCLUSION

For many travellers, what separates one hotel from another is the quality of service. Unfortunately, good service is so intangible a concept that it is difficult to say what the hotel sector can do to improve things. This is one of the toughest challenges for the hotel sector because a guest always has the potential to interact with so many different front line associates at so many times of the day. To accommodate a guest's high expectations of good service, front line associates must be given the tools to do their jobs, and one of these tools is training. As the professional practice of hospitality becomes more widespread, professional hotel managements are likely to play a central role in co-ordinating organisational tasks, structures, people, conducting training and introducing new technology. One of the biggest HR roles in the hotel sector is to ensure success with training programs provided for front line associates particularly in the area of training transfer to the workplace.

Training transfer strategies can be classified as those involving managers, trainers and associates and those implemented before, during and after training. As noted, training transfer is often inhibited by a lack of management commitment and involvement. However, when these elements are present, they are among the greatest enablers of transfer learning on the job. To ensure that training benefits the hotel sector, training evaluation need to be undertaken.

There are about as many thoughts on how to gauge training effectiveness, as there are trainers. However, training practitioners often rely on Donald Kirkpatrick’ s evaluation model as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation. For this reason, therefore the next paper demonstrates the use of Kirkpatrick’s model at some leading hotels in Sydney.
CHAPTER 3: KIRKPATRICK TRAINING EVALUATION

"If you don't evaluate the effectiveness of your training, you simply continue to train as always, which could be in a very inefficient and ineffective manner" (Read, 2001: 16).

3.1. Introduction

Training programs particularly in the hotel sector of the tourism and hospitality industry, have been, and still are, being conducted. The industry is becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of knowledge, of skills and of learning to the industry.

In the past a booming world economy combined with a growing number of tourist arrivals and increased hotel occupancy rates gave training programs a 'unique status' in the business world as expenses that were typically easy to justify, but "equally impossible to evaluate" (Leavitt, 2001:1). Now the hotel managers have to be increasingly accountable for the money they spend on training. The effect of this is to turn up the pressure for training accountability (Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998; Alliger et al., 1997; Redshaw, 2001; Leavit, 2001).

Kirkpatrick's model appears workable in determining the effectiveness of any training programs offered for front line associates in the hotel sector. Some scholars (e.g., Alliger and Janak, 1989; Shelton and Alliger, 1993; Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Alliger et al, 1997) support the idea of using Kirkpatrick's model to evaluate training programs.

There is, however, a need also to discuss briefly the meaning of program evaluation in the social context.
3.2. Evaluation of training programs: benefits and the timing of evaluation

One characteristic of a successful training program is the transfer of the trained tasks to the job (Kirkpatrick, 1998). A method to find out whether there has been a successful transfer of training to the job is by conducting evaluation. As Kirkpatrick (1998) argues, evaluating the effectiveness of training programs is essential for managers who need to ensure that trainees apply the learning gained from training to their work situation. The importance of determining how transfer of training to the workplace influences trainees’ work performances can be seen as the driving force behind conducting training evaluation which can be carried out in the beginning of the program, during the program or after the program has been completed.

3.2.1. Benefits of conducting evaluation of training programs

As stated previously, training practitioners have often relied on Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model, also known as the four-level evaluation model, as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation (e.g., Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kimmerling, 1993). Evaluation of training programs can provide valuable information on how the program can be improved, maintained or terminated; identify any difficulties in the organisation performance; identify the most effective training method; and assess the relevance of the program for the participants through improved knowledge and skills (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Nankervis et al, 1999).

The outcome when conducting training program evaluation, therefore, is to determine whether the training program objectives were achieved and as a consequence whether organisations received benefits (i.e., improved work
performance, improved customer service, increased positive feedback, reduced complaints) as a result of trainees applying their training to their workplaces (Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998).

3.2.2 The time of conducting training program evaluation

According to Deves (1997) program evaluation can be formative or summative. Formative evaluation is conducted “during the operational life of the program” whereas summative evaluation is carried out “at the conclusion of a program” (Deves, 1997: 133). More recently, Worthen, Sanders and Fitzpatrick (1997) coined the term ‘confirmative evaluation’ to describe program evaluation that is conducted after the program had been implemented and in operation for a significant period to see how well it retains its effectiveness across time.

Kirkpatrick’s four training evaluation levels can be conducted either at the beginning of the training programs, during the training programs or at the end of the training programs (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

In line with what Deves (1997: 133) described as summative evaluation at “the conclusion of a program”, this research applies a summative evaluation approach to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs for front line associates at four major hotels in Sydney. The next section examines Kirkpatrick’s model in more depth.
3.3. Training evaluation

Available evidence suggests that approximately 30% of corporations conduct no formal evaluation of their training programs (Bernhard and Ingots, 1988) and 13% of human resource executives do not employ a systematic training evaluation process (Scovel 1990). A study of training in Britain revealed that 85% of British employers make no attempt to assess the benefits gained from undertaking training (Lewis and Thornhill, 1994). Even if adequate time and money were available, it is likely that more than 20% of managers would not evaluate their training programs (Honeycutt and Stevenson 1989 cited in Honeycutt Jr et al., 2001).

As mentioned earlier, if organisations do evaluate their training programs, most evaluations are conducted at the reaction level (Kirkpatrick level one). For example: in the USA, Ralphs and Steven (1986 cited in Bramley and Kitson, 1994) found that 86 per cent of the Fortune 500 companies evaluated their training programs only using the reaction level. Furthermore, Bramley and Kitson (1994) reviewed a study conducted by the Training Agency in Britain that surveyed a large number of organisations responsible for some 80 per cent of the employed workforce in the UK and found that, in 1986/87, 90 per cent of organisations used the reaction level of evaluation (Kirkpatrick level one), but only 19 per cent attempted any evaluation in terms of benefits to the organisation (Kirkpatrick level four). In Australia, Smith (1996: 13) found that “too often organisations do evaluate at level one when they seek reactions from trainees as their opinions on the worth of the course and seldom venture into level two, three, and four”. According to Kirkpatrick (1998 cited in Putra 2002a: 3) one of the reasons most organisations do not attempt evaluating at the other three levels is because “the level reaction is very simple to implement and produces a quick result”.

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However, managers appear to recognise the importance of training evaluation. The Kirkpatrick (1998) four stage evaluation model is a commonly employed framework for understanding and evaluating training programs (Carnevale and Schutz, 1990; Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992; Faerman and Ban, 1993; Gordon 1996; Lupton et al., 1999; Honeycutt Jr et al., 2001)

There is a necessary set of things to do to get the most effective results from a training initiative. Each step in this process asks specific questions that have to be answered before the next step can be approached (Broadwell, 1993). The measuring of gains in organisational effectiveness that result from training interventions is probably the most difficult task of all in training evaluation (Redshaw, 2001); for example, accountants and senior line managers tend to want to measure results of most, if not all, organisational activities in monetary terms, so it is no surprising that they press for trainers to tell them what the ‘bottom line’ gain is for a given amount of money invested in a training event. On the one hand, if trainers were to accept this task too readily they might eventually find it very difficult to prove the connection between training input and organisational gains and, as a result, they may be forced into a defensive position, adopting a ‘power games’ approach to evaluation. On the other hand, if trainers are seen to be reluctant to accept the task they could face a loss of credibility in an environment where all other managers and departments are assessed on their outputs. This dilemma, however, is not a valid reason for not addressing the issue. What needs to be done is to recognise (and to help others to recognise) the difficulties involved and to adopt an approach that clearly identifies what can and what cannot be evaluated easily.

Redshaw (2001: 16) states that “the area of difficulty is that there are many other factors (could be internal or external to the organisation) that can have an influence (positively or negatively) on organisational results such as, other organisational activities (e.g.,
marketing); market forces; competitive activity; new technology; legislation; the economy; industrial action; conflicting internal priorities; resistance to change”. Boulard (2000) gave an example of a marketing department in a hotel organisation (e.g., sales department) in a situation where no improvement in sales results occurred following a sales training programme, it could quite easily be assumed that the training was ineffective, when in fact the real reason may have been that a strong competitor had introduced a more effective product. Or, to take another example, actions of uncooperative line managers (with perhaps other priorities) may be blocking their associates' use of their newly gained competences, and thus give the impression that the training is ineffective.

Another difficult area, as acknowledged by Redshaw (2001), is that the results of training may take considerable time to show up in overall results. If this time span is, say, more than a year then the connection between training input and operational outcomes may not be realised. Finally, as it has been suggested above, it is quite often the case that accountants and line managers view training evaluation very differently from the way trainers view it. Trainers know the nature of training and how different its evaluation can be from other forms of evaluation. Accountants and managers may believe that training evaluation is no different from any other form of evaluation, i.e. that you simply compare outputs with inputs.

However, the most widely used measures of effectiveness, both within organisations and of organisations as a whole, focus on the extent to which targets or goals are met; e.g., sales achieved, units produced, increased ability to respond, reduced customer complaints; reduced absenteeism; increased motivation and work commitment, profit generated and/or quality improvements (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Redshaw, 2001).
Therefore, it is possible to identify and agree jointly on those elements where a training intervention is likely to bring about an improvement, and also how its effectiveness can be assessed. Consequently, training evaluation measures can be built into existing monitoring processes.

According to Kirkpatrick (1996, 1998) and Tharenou (2001) evaluation can be based on hard data such as labour turnover or positive elements like teamwork; job satisfaction; motivation; commitment; or negative elements such as absenteeism; grievances; industrial action; disciplinary actions. Redshaw (2001: 16) argues that “improvements in these areas resulting from training interventions may be difficult to assess but, again, most organisations monitor these things and with prior planning and joint agreement it could well be possible to build in evaluation measures”. It appears that evaluation of organisational effectiveness as a result of training interventions is more likely to be successful when:

- Evaluation is considered at the point when training needs are originally identified (Broadwell, 1993);

- Line managers are involved in the planning and monitoring process (Coffman, 1990; Broadwell, 1993; Redshaw, 2001);

- Due consideration and recognition are given to factors other than training (Holton III, 1996);

- Evaluation is focused at sub-organisational or functional levels (Broadwell, 1993; Holton III, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Redshaw, 2001).

When in due course a training intervention is identified that will bring about these improvements, then the indicators for success (as already identified by line managers)
can be linked to the training input (Coffman, 1990; Erickson, 1990; Bramley, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998). These indicators then can become the bases of objectives both for the training and for the subsequent evaluation (Redshaw, 2001). During this process it is essential that as many as possible of the factors other than training that will affect the outcomes are jointly identified and agreed (Holton III, 1996; Redshaw, 2001). If it is possible to find a way of measuring the effects of these factors, this too should be agreed at this point (Kirkpatrick, 1998). It is very important that this line management involvement is strong and that it is continued (Coffman, 1990; Erickson, 1990; Bramley, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998). Wherever possible line managers' own terms for success and for its measurement should be used to ensure training effectiveness and it should be agreed how they (the managers) will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process (Coffman, 1990; Erickson, 1990; Bramley, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Lashley, 1998; Redshaw, 2001).

Effective training must have value for the organisation (Lewis and Thornhill, 1994). Definitions of training evaluation emphasise the value of training and the definition provided by Buckley and Caple (1990) stresses its value to the whole organisation. According to Buckley and Caple (1990) training evaluation is the process of attempting to assess the total value of training. Familiar British and American models of training evaluation recognise that the ultimate objective of training is its benefit to the performance of the organisation (Lewis and Thornhill, 1994; Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Bramley, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Redshaw, 2001).

However, the lack of research underpinning training evaluation procedures is a weak point in the area of Human Resource Development (Holton III, 1996). Since Kirkpatrick's model was first published in 1959 the further development of approaches to the evaluation of training has had an ongoing attractiveness. The 4-evaluation levels used
by Kirkpatrick (reaction, learning, behavior, and results) are now being both challenged by some and further refined by others (Holton III, 1996).

Despite challenges to Kirkpatrick's model, many training specialists state that the model is a practicable and well liked approach to training evaluation (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Ginsberg, 1989; Carnevale and Schutz, 1990; Erickson, 1990; Shelton and Alliger, 1993; Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Alliger et al., 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998).

3.4. Kirkpatrick's four level training evaluation

Training researchers agree on the importance of evaluating training (e.g., Goldstein, 1993). There is equally strong agreement among training practitioners on the difficulty of doing so (Carnevale and Schutz, 1990). For any training evaluation to be valuable, however, training criteria must be psychometrically sound, meaningful to decision makers and must be able to be collected within typical organisational constraints (Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992). Research has revealed that by far the most commonly collected training criteria are trainee reactions which, although easy to collect, may or may not be related to other, often more meaningful indicators for training evaluation (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Holton III, 1996; Bassi, Benson and Cheney, 1996 cited in Alliger et al., 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998; Cooke, 2000; Noe, 2000; Morgan and Casper, 2000).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Kirkpatrick's four level model (1998) continues to be the most prevalent framework for categorising training criteria. This simple taxonomy of training criteria (Williams, 1989; Holton III, 1996) became very popular in business and academia because it addressed a need to understand training evaluation simply yet systematically (Shelton and Alliger, 1993). The model's simplicity is appealing but, as revealed in more
recent work, this simplicity is also a liability. Alliger and Janak (1989) conducted a meta-analytic review of the literature based on Kirkpatrick’s model. They concluded that “Kirkpatrick’s model provides a vocabulary and rough taxonomy for criteria. At the same time, Kirkpatrick’s model, through its easily adopted vocabulary and a number of (often implicit) assumptions, can lead to misunderstandings and over generalizations” (Alliger and Janak, 1989: 331-332). Although there seem to be problems with Kirkpatrick’s model, just how best to think about training criteria is not clear. Nonetheless, the Kirkpatrick typology remains by far the most influential and prevalent approach among practitioners (Kirkpatrick, 1998) and, to a certain extent, researchers. For this reason, it can still serve as a point of departure for communicating understandings about training criteria (Alliger et al., 1997).

Training professionals tend to rely on the model proposed by Kirkpatrick which describes four-stages of evaluation - reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Faerman and Ban, 1993, Alliger et al., 1997; Spitzer, 1999). Some practitioners acknowledge Kirkpatrick’s model for training evaluation as the standard in the field (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Holton III, 1996; Alliger et al., 1997; Abernathy, 1999). From 1959 until his latest book published in 1998, Kirkpatrick defines reaction (how participants in the program react to the program), learning (the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge and/or skills as a result of attending the program), behaviour (the extent to which change in behavior has occurred because the participant attended the training program), and results (the final results that occurred because the participants attended the program). As previously mentioned, however, many changes to this model have been proposed. Hamblin (1974) for example, added a fifth level (economic benefits) to reflect training’s ultimate value in terms of an organisation’s criteria for success. Also Kaufman and Keller (1994) noted the internal
and external consequences of all interventions associated with performance and organisational improvement. Phillips (1995, cited in Holton III, 1996) and Parry (1996) indicated that the importance of financial benefits needed to be included. Brinkerhoff (1988) has developed an alternative model to Kirkpatrick’s. Brinkerhoff (1988, 1998) has proposed a six-stage evaluation model consisting of goal setting, program design, program implementation, immediate outcome, usage outcome and impacts; in essence, adding two formative evaluation stages as precursors to Kirkpatrick’s four levels.

However, all these models have received incomplete implementation, little empirical testing (Holton III, 1996) and appear very complex (Dionne, 1996). Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992) and Dionne (1996) have also identified weaknesses such as the lack of a unifying theory; and Wexley and Baldwin (1986), Noe and Ford (1992 cited in Dionne, 1996), and Holton III (1996) have queried the validity of existing research findings.

Managers, who implement Kirkpatrick’s model, tend to use only the first level (Kirkpatrick, 1998). According to Kirkpatrick (1998) the level of evaluation called reaction is very simple to implement and produces a quick result that is beneficial to trainers and managers in ensuring that training programs run well. Holton III (1996) and Cooke (2000) support this view. Unfortunately trainers and managers have not yet gone beyond this level for many reasons. Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined several possible reasons for this failure to further systematically develop such a model:

- Managers do not consider evaluation to be important,
- Managers do not know how to evaluate training beyond the first level,
- There is no pressure from higher management to do more.
Although researchers and practitioners seem not to have systematically developed a better model of training evaluation, it can be argued that their work in the training evaluation area has contributed greatly to identifying the components which need to be included in any comprehensive model of training evaluation for use in today's environment.

Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined his four levels of training evaluation as follows:

**Level 1. Reactions**

Originally, to assess 'reactions' was to ask trainees how they liked and felt about training; i.e., reactions were emotionally based opinions. Indeed, the term 'reactions' seems to imply an immediate, more or less unthinking, response. However, the boundary between feeling and a more considered opinion is fuzzy at best, and trainers have asked a wide variety of 'reaction' questions. Several researchers have suggested that reaction measures that directly ask trainees about the transferability or utility of the training should be more closely related to other criteria than would reactions measures that ask about 'liking' (e.g., Alliger and Janak, 1989; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992). Attitude theorists acknowledge the difference between affective and more behaviourally evaluative responses (Eagly and Chaiken, 1992). Interestingly and independent of this research, Warr and Bunce (1995) suggested a tripartite division of reaction measures: enjoyment of training, usefulness of training, and difficulty of training.

Kirkpatrick (1998: 19) defines reaction as "how well the trainees liked different training program aspects (e.g., the instructor, training facilities, schedules, and materials)". This evaluation stage which utilizes surveys with categorical ratings of 'poor' to 'excellent', does not attempt to determine if learning has occurred. In effect, trainees provide
trainers and managers with impressions of the training received. Training instructors believe that personality and course content can subjectively influence these ratings. Because of the ease of conducting this assessment, most firms evaluate trainees' reactions to training programs.

According to Kirkpatrick (1998) to achieve the ‘bottom lines’ of training programs, managers have to be able to demonstrate and ensure that training participants react favourably. Nevertheless a study by Alliger and Janak (1989) has found that positive reactions do not necessarily lead to learning but may act as a mediator of learning (Mathieu et al., 1992). Further, Dixon (1990) and Warr and Bunce (1995) found little or no significant correlation between reactions and learning. However, Patrick (1992) said that trainees' reactions could play a role in building interest and attention and thus enhance the motivation to learn. Even though trainees' reactions are not directly related to learning outcomes, a positive reaction could still be a good indication that training programs are useful (Kirkpatrick, 1998) as it may encourage trainees to pay attention and learn. Indeed, Holton III (1996: 10) supported this by saying “more positive reactions to training may aid learning, and trainees who are more successful during learning are expected to have more positive reactions to the learning experience”.

**Level 2. Learning**

According to Alliger et al (1997: 350) learning as a training criterion is “indexed by results of traditional tests of declarative knowledge”. Furthermore, Alliger et al (1997) explicate that learning can be seen through procedural knowledge and/or performance of trained tasks immediately after training. The second evaluation level attempts to measure the degree to which the trainee learned "principles, facts, and techniques" Kirkpatrick (1998: 20) presented in the training process. The purpose of evaluating learning is to assess
whether the trainee can employ knowledge gained. Evaluation techniques recommended for assessing knowledge include classroom demonstration, individual performance and discussion of information covered.

**Level 3: behaviour**

The third evaluation level examines the adoption of principles and techniques on the job. Behaviour changes are measured by having the trainee, along with their associates, colleagues, and supervisors, complete a survey. Kirkpatrick (1998: 48) has defined behaviour "as the extent to which change in behaviour has occurred because the participants attended the training program". Holton III (1996) used individual performances to measure training outcomes. Furthermore, Holton III (1996) and Warr et al., (1999) said that organisationally bottom lines can be achieved as a result of changes in individual performances. Cooke’s (2000) view was that if an individual can perform jobs better this might affect organisational results. Cooke (2000) gave the following example; sales training could support a bank’s goal to increase loans provided to customers and could be measured by the amount of loans and dollars sold by each employee. It appears that changes in any individual’s performance in the workplace might influence organisational results.

**Level 4: results**

This level refers to "the objectives of most programs stated in terms of the results desired" (Kirkpatrick, 1998: 28); e.g., increased sales revenue, increased profits, reduced mistakes on documentation. Kirkpatrick declares that it is relatively easy to assess the results of training conducted to reduce mistakes in travel reports simply count the number of mistakes before and after the training program. However, it is more difficult to ‘separate’ job performance factors that contribute to increased sales revenue
from other extraneous variables. Kirkpatrick (1998: 31) concludes the series of four articles by stating that "eventually we may be able to measure ... training (results)... in terms of dollars and cents".

3.4.1. Issues related to Kirkpatrick's model

The strength of Kirkpatrick's model lies in its straightforwardness and its ability to assist people conducting evaluations of training programs (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998). At the same time, however, "its easily adopted criteria and its assumptions could lead to misunderstandings in its application and overgeneralizations of its results" (Alliger and Janak, 1989: 332); for example, Kirkpatrick (1996, 1998) suggests that to evaluate training effectiveness, managers should evaluate at all of the four levels. The reason for this is because different levels provide different kinds of information (Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998).

However, it is not clear that all training in organizations is designed to cause change at all four levels; for example, if training is meant to effect technical skills then evaluation may be best carried out on performance (level three). Similarly, if the training program is limited to providing general knowledge of a current economic situation, it may be best measured by growth in knowledge (level two). Another training program could be aimed at changing how front line staff communicate with customers and so might be most appropriately measured by behaviour change (level three) and results (level four). If evaluations were conducted at all 4 levels of Kirkpatrick's model in these instances, the lack of outcomes in some levels may be misinterpreted as indicative of poor training.

Notwithstanding, as previously mentioned, this Kirkpatrick's first level of trainees' reactions is by most accounts the principal means by which organisations evaluate

It can be argued that, although trainees’ reactions to training are clearly not the sole indicator of its effectiveness, it is possible that their reactions represent one variable that is part of other variables that influence training effectiveness. Alliger and Janak (1989) have found that positive reactions do not necessarily lead to learning but may act as a mediator of learning. Indeed, a study by Mathieu et al., (1992) supported this by showing that reactions to training played an important indirect role in both learning and posttraining performance. Although such findings suggest that trainees’ reactions to training may indeed play an important role in understanding training effectiveness, their reactions can provide substantive input for the design and improvement of training efforts (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Morgan and Casper, 2000). In addition, as previously mentioned, even though trainees’ reactions are not directly related to learning outcomes, a positive reaction could still be a good indication that training programs are useful (Kirkpatrick, 1998) as it may encourage trainees to pay attention and learn.

In contrast, a number of studies have examined the correlations among the four levels of training criteria with generally discouraging results (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Holton III, 1996; Alliger et al., 1997). The meta-analytic results presented in those studies show little systematic relationship between trainees’ reactions and other levels (learning, behaviour and results) of training criteria. In addition, Warr et al., (1999: 351) stated “to determine that a single training activity is the cause of any such change is logically dubious”.

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However, although trainees’ reactions in general show little systematic relationship to learning, behavior and organisational results, particular facets or dimensions of trainees’ reactions appear to hold more promise (Kirkpatrick, 1996, 1998; Borman, Hansen and Hedge, 1997; Morgan and Casper, 2000). More recently, Morgan and Casper (2000: 301) state “understanding the dimensionality of trainees’ reactions to training will facilitate clarification of the specific role that reactions play in training effectiveness and the evaluation of training outcomes”.

Training effectiveness also, in part, can be determined by examining the transfer of learning (Kirkpatrick behaviour level) to the work environment (Noe, 1986; Holton III et al., 1997; and Kirkpatrick, 1998). In the context of an organisation’s training program, the word ‘transfer’ refers to a trainee’s application to the job of what is learned (Burke, 1997). Transfer of learning, in this context, can be defined as the degree to which trainees apply in their jobs the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes they obtained in training (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Holton III et al., 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Burke and Baldwin, 1999). Baldwin and Ford (1988 cited in Holton III et al., 1997; Wexley and Latham, 1991 cited in Holton III et al., 1997) have highlighted a number of factors that might impact on learning transfer and one of these is the extent to which the trainee is given the opportunity on the job to perform the tasks taught in training sessions on the job. Opportunities to perform depend in part upon:

- the work experiences of trainees after the training, and the tasks set by the supervisor (Holton III et al., 1997),

- the effort of trainees to obtain work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained (Ford et al., 1992).
It is also important for trainers to know the type of work environment which encourages (e.g., rewards, job aids), discourages (e.g., ridicule from peers) or actually prohibits the application of new skills and knowledge on the job (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980; Ford et al., 1992; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh, 1995). Kirkpatrick (1998: 21) supports this by stating that trainees who work in conditions supportive of transfer of learning appear to “transfer their newly acquired skills and knowledge into individual performance changes on the job” and they may seek to continue learning for further development (Chambers, 2002).

To achieve continuous learning practice, trainees should be given work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained (Ford et al., 1992). In addition, Robotham (1999: 21) explains that the amount of learning that trainees transfer from the training room to the workplace depends, mainly, on two aspects of the workplace conditions:

- “The degree of similarity between what occurs in the workplace and what was learned in the training program (and this includes how it was presented),

- How easily the trainees can integrate into the work environment the skills or knowledge gained in the training program”.

In line with Kirkpatrick’s (1998) approaches this research involves a field study and is aimed at obtaining associates’ reaction to training programs at hotel chains in Sydney. As soon as the information about associates’ reactions is gathered, then investigating the rest of Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels can be conducted.
CONCLUSION

Kirkpatrick's evaluation model has been widely accepted and the model implies that conducting an evaluation is a relatively standardised process. Indeed the model offers some flexibility, is simple, and can assist in the contemplation of training evaluation criteria. In addition, his model describes how each level requires the evaluation of preceding levels. Although the low correlations with other evaluation levels have led some researchers (e.g., Holton III, 1996; Alliger et al., 1997) to question the credibility of trainees' reactions (Kirkpatrick's reaction level) as training criteria, this chapter has highlighted the role that obtaining trainees' reactions can play in systematic training evaluation. Trainees' reactions can be used to find out their motivation to learn. If this is combined with managerial and supervisory support as well as the trainers' encouragement to apply training learned to the workplace, this can increase trainees' eagerness to transfer learning to their jobs.

Transfer of learning appears more likely to occur when 'identical elements' exist in both the training program and the work situation (Putra, 2002c). In other words, the training's content and activities should reflect the real world. In addition, the trainees should be given the opportunity to perform the tasks on the job.

However, attempting to measure Kirkpatrick's four levels is not the simple matter it may seem. It appears difficult to isolate and show the effects of formal training as the sole and independent variable influencing the effectiveness of any training activities.

Despite this, Kirkpatrick's model may be adequate for others who demand a simple model which they can understand and which allows them to get started on the evaluation of training programs.
CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF EVALUATING
STARWOOD CARES TRAINING PROGRAMS: DEMONSTRATING
KIRKPATRICK'S TRAINING EVALUATION MODEL

"No matter how small or large your organisations is, you will be able to
apply one or more levels in evaluating your programs. Kirkpatrick's
guidelines provide a basis for evaluation and the case studies provide
ideas for you to use and modify to implement the guidelines" (Eric
Freitag – Manager Intel University Chandler Arizona – cited in

4.1. Overview

Hospitality products are simultaneously produced and consumed. A hotel is producing
the services and products that will impact on a guest’s stay while the guest is staying in
the hotel. In today’s rapidly changing business environment managers must keep in
touch with their customers and respond to their changing wants.

Nowadays, the hotel sector appears “to be facing increasingly competitive pressures to
improve the quality of its delivery of products and services” (Putra, 2002a: 1). One
mechanism for improving quality is through improvements in the technical skills of the
associates delivering the products and services (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990 cited in
Putra, 2002a: 1). For many in the hotel sector, success depends largely on the
availability of a qualified workforce which is able to deliver and consistently maintain the
company’s operational standards of service. Thus, many in the hotel sector now
emphasise training activities for front line associates as a means of providing an
outstanding service for their customers.

However, very little information is available on whether the money spent on training
helps organisations to achieve their business objectives. In addition, as stated formerly,
there is a growing concern among managers to find out whether the training programs conducted, particularly for front line associates, can achieve their objectives. This has led to increased interest in the evaluation of training programs for front line associates.

As the primary focus of this project has been on demonstrating Kirkpatrick's four levels approach in the hotel sector, this project was carried out in order to investigate the effectiveness of Starwood Cares Training Program for its front line associates at its hotel chain in Sydney.

4.2 Introduction

4.2.1 The Starwood cares program

Starwood, the hotel sector and resorts, is one of the world’s largest hotel chains with units on nearly every continent and in almost every country. To ensure successful delivery of service, Starwood conducts thorough assessments of its associates’ needs by means of interview with the Area Director of Human Resources and the Learning and Development Manager. Once needs are identified, clear training objectives are developed that describe what associates will learn and they state the conditions under which associates will perform and the criteria by which successful performance will be judged. According to Starwood, a successful training program is one which associates like and understand, and as a result of which they apply new skills and knowledge which has a positive impact on business results. The ultimate goal of a Starwood Cares training program is moving the skills, knowledge and attitudes learnt in the classroom into the workplace. (See Appendix 5 for further details of Starwood Cares training program transfer learning measurements and Appendix 6 for details of the objectives of Starwood Cares training program).
4.3. Research design

4.3.1. Research study

This research involves investigating of the Starwood Cares service training program at 4 major hotels in Sydney. These are The Sheraton on the Park, The Westin Hotel, Four Points by Sheraton Sydney, and W hotel.

Profiles under study indicate that the hotels are:

- Located in a capital city;
- The corporation is organized by geographic divisions: North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and South America;
- Guided by a mission statement that is Starwood's mission is to be the pre-eminent international hotel and leisure company, positioned as a global leader in the full service, upscale and luxury hotel sectors.

(Source: Starwood The hotel sector and Resorts Worldwide, 2000)

4.3.2. Research aims

The specific aims for this project are to:

(a) Demonstrate the applicability of Kirkpatrick's model to the hotel sector,

(b) Investigate the effectiveness of STAR service standards provided for front line associates at Starwood hotel chains in Sydney,

(c) Make recommendations for improving STAR service standards
4.4. Research methodology and data collection

4.4.1. Research method

This project involves survey research and obtaining information directly from the hotel associates and managers using questionnaires.

4.4.2. Sample and procedures

Two different surveys were distributed to 2 target groups. These were hotel associates and managers.

I. Associates

This research is an investigative study. The population of associates who had attended Starwood STAR training programs at all four of the hotel sector were invited to participate in the research project. Seven hundred questionnaires were distributed and 276 returned. This gave a 39.9% response rate. The associates who participated in this survey were employed in various work departments, representing most of the service departments of the hotels. For more details of the sample, please refer to Section 4.6.1 Table 4.3.

Given the nature of this research which involved voluntary participation, free of rewards and punishments, a response rate of 39.9% seems more than adequate for this piece of research. Prior to making contact with the respondents, some key ethical issues were considered such as the need for voluntary participation and the paramount importance of maintaining the respondents' confidentiality (Lipson, 1994; Sarantakos, 1998).
A survey research project may include “as few as 100 participants” (Dane, 1990: 120). From Dane’s (1990) point of view, this research has achieved the minimum sample size to enable the researchers to undertake the investigation and have confidence in the obtained results.

II. Managers

In evaluating the effectiveness of any training program, it is necessary also to ask about the managers’ points of view and allow them to be involved in the training evaluation (Bramley, 1996). This is simply because managers will be able to see the value of the training in relation to the organisation’s goals. Obtaining multiple viewpoints on the effectiveness of training programs can improve the validity of the final evaluation of such programs. Thus, in this research, it was also crucial to ask managers about the STAR service standards and to what kind of recommendations Starwood hotel chains were likely to respond.

The population of managers at the four hotels was invited to participate in this survey. One hundred questionnaires were distributed and 67 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 67%. The managers who were involved in this survey were employed in various work departments of the hotels. For further details of the sample, please refer to Section 4.6.2 Table 4.11.

As previously stated, given the nature of this research which involved voluntary participation free of rewards and punishments, a response rate of 67% (managers) seems more than adequate for analysis of results in this piece of research.
4.4.3. Survey questionnaire development

The researcher used Kirkpatrick's four levels training evaluation model to determine the types of questions asked in the questionnaires about the training course and the associates' learning outcomes.

I. Associates

The questionnaire for associates was divided into four sections. The first section asked about the associates' backgrounds and the next three sections were developed based on Kirkpatrick's four levels of reaction, learning, behaviour (learning transfer) and organisational results. (See Appendix 3 for a copy of the survey).

II. Managers

The managers' questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part asked about the department they were supervising and the second part looked for their appraisal of associates' work performances after the associates applied STAR service standards to their workplace. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the survey).

The survey questionnaires contained the following:

1. The cover letter, which aimed to introduce the potential respondents to the research topic and outlined the reasons why the respondent might want to complete the questionnaire.

2. The instructions, which explained how to fill out the questionnaires. These were written in simple language.

3. Most questions for associates and managers were written as statements with a rating scale of options from which the respondents could select. The scales were
numbered ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree. (See Appendix 3 for an example of the Associates’ questionnaire and Appendix 4 for an example of the Managers’ questionnaire).

4. Multiple response questions were also included when more than one answer could have been validly selected.

4.4.4. Survey questionnaire distribution

1 Prior to distributing the survey questionnaire, the researcher sought the Area Director of Human Resources and the Learning and Development Manager’s approval of the questionnaires.

2 Once approved, the researcher distributed the questionnaire at each hotel. The researcher visited two hotels one day and another two hotels the next day. In one hotel, the researcher stayed for 4 hours to distribute the questionnaire.

3 The questionnaires for associates and for managers were distributed simultaneously and from the same distribution point. The completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes for collection by the researcher. The researcher collected the returned questionnaires at the conclusion of their distribution. Each questionnaire took approximately 15 – 20 minutes to complete. This method assured the trainee participant’s involvement was entirely voluntary and confidential.

4.5. Data analysis

All the data were analysed using SPSS to determine frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. A ‘process of coding’ was used to identify each respondent to
differentiate each question into variable name, variable label and value label. The results are explained in the following section (Cookes, 1999).
4.6. Findings

4.6.1 Associates

Seven hundred questionnaires were distributed and 276 returned. This gave a 39.9% response rate. Four associates did not answer the question about gender. Of the remaining 272 responding trainees, 117 (43%) were female and 155 (57%) were male. Fifty-four percent had been employed up to a year, 32% had been employed between a year and 3 years and the rest had been employed more than 3 years.

The data were analysed to provide information on the background of the associate respondents, their levels of education, their work departments, frequency of guest contacts and their responses to the statements on the questionnaire. Table 4.1 shows the number of associates who responded to the questionnaire from each hotel.

Table 4.1 The number and the percentage of associates from each hotel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>20.07</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>21.53</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 274

Nearly half of all respondents were employed at the Westin Sydney. It would be valuable to know if the number of respondents from each hotel is proportional to the number of associates at each hotel who undertook STAR training. Unfortunately this information was not available to the researcher. Table 4.2 shows the levels of education of the associate respondents from the four hotels.
Table 4.2 Educational qualifications of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 10 or similar</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 12 or similar</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>19.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate in hospitality management</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in hospitality management</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>16.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate degree in hospitality management</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate degree in hospitality management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other certificate</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other diploma</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other undergraduate degree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>12.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other postgraduate degree</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that most respondents (88.2%) do not have a formal hospitality management qualification. This may well indicate that gaining work in this industry does not necessarily require any specific hospitality qualification. It may also help explain why on the job training is important to overcome this lack of specific education.

The following tables show workplace information provided by the associate respondents. Please note that due to rounding errors, some of the percentages may produce 100%, or less than 100%, or more than 100%. The following tables contain the responses of those who supplied an answer to the question under consideration. Blank responses have been disregarded.
Table 4.3  The work department of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hotel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheraton Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concierge/bell</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front office / reception</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewarding</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In room dining</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquets</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 shows the range of work the respondents perform. Nearly half (N = 132 or 48.70%) were employed in direct service departments such as concierge/bell, front office/reception, reservations, communication, dining room, bar, banquets and the restaurant. The remainder (N = 139, 51.29%) were employed in departments, which provided services to guests without direct contact. Most of the associates responding to the questionnaire were in positions which entailed frequent customer contact (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4 The number and percentage of associates serving guests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hotel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheraton Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very frequent</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very often</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4.4 shows, a majority of (N = 34 or 53%) respondents had frequent, very frequent or continuous guests contact. Only a few (N = 19 or 30%) respondents had occasional, not very often, rare or no guests contact at all.
Thus, the respondents to this questionnaire are from work departments where implementation of STAR service standards is required frequently. These respondents provided the following answers to the questions on the training program.

The next Tables only show the responses from respondents who have indicated they strongly agreed or agreed with each statement on the questionnaire. This is simply because nearly all of the respondents at each hotel (between 70% and 100%) have selected either agree or strongly agree to each question.

**THE COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Table 4.5  Positive respondents of agreement about course objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheraton Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course objectives achieved</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly understood course objectives</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows that more than 90% of all hotel associates reacted favourably to the course, indicating that they understood the course objectives and achieved them. Their reaction to the course content was equally positive.
THE COURSE CONTENT

Table 4.6 Positive respondents of agreement about STAR Service Standards content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical application</td>
<td>52 99</td>
<td>55 93</td>
<td>115 94</td>
<td>31 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valuable for career development</td>
<td>46 84</td>
<td>53 91</td>
<td>111 90</td>
<td>26 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was interesting</td>
<td>51 95</td>
<td>51 88</td>
<td>110 90</td>
<td>28 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content was well organised</td>
<td>54 98</td>
<td>55 93</td>
<td>120 98</td>
<td>33 97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows that a strong majority of respondent (more than 75%) from each hotel strongly agreed or agreed to the positive statements in the questionnaire related to the content of STAR service standards. Overall, they felt the content was practical, worthwhile, well organised and useful to their careers.

They also felt the course material was relevant to their workplaces as shown in table 4.7.
THE COURSE USEFULNESS AND ITS RELEVANCE

Table 4.7  Positive respondents about course relevance and usefulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheraton Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant to current job</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided useful ideas</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and knowledge are relevant</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows that the majority of respondents (more than 80%) from each hotel strongly agreed or agreed to the statements concerning the relevance of STAR service standards to their present job. It appears that STAR service standards were perceived as applicable, helpful and associated with their jobs.

In order to more fully determine the usefulness, relevance, and helpfulness of the training program, it is also important to find out the trainers effectiveness as they facilitate and motivate learning transfer. If the trainer was found to be effective in the sense of having in depth knowledge of the content, it could help associates to learn quickly and this could lead to increased knowledge, improved skills and a positive attitude on the job. The next Table illustrates the trainer's effectiveness as judged by his/her ability to teach, to motivate associates, to explain STAR comprehensively, to solve associates' problems, to monitor work progress and to provide hands on illustration, as assessed by the respondents in their training course.
The Trainer

Table 4.8  Respondents' positive views of the trainer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach the subject thoroughly</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage associates</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain STAR in details</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help associates with problems</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor associate's progress</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give practical examples</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 shows that more than half of respondents (70%) from each hotel strongly agreed or agreed to the statements on the questionnaire about their trainers. This result is very positive. It appears that trainer was perceived as effective in teaching the course and supportive to associates in the transfer of their learning to the workplace. Furthermore, because the trainer was able to demonstrate STAR using practical working examples, associates had increased knowledge, learned new skills and possessed positive attitudes which could support them to apply STAR on the job.
APPLYING STAR

The following table provides the respondents' views on the extent to which they used the STAR service standards in their work.

Table 4.9  Respondents' application of STAR Service Standards to the job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify customers' needs</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceed customers' expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide customers' expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain the benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handle customers' complaints</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>109</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome to customers</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
<td>116</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 illustrates that most associates (approximately 90%) state that they have applied STAR service standards to their job. A module titled ‘Welcome to Customers’ appears to be the main evidence at W Sydney where all respondents admitted that they had applied it on the job. The remainder have also demonstrated that STAR service standards have been applied.

Previous Tables demonstrated that associates had applied STAR service standards. However, it was also important to find out any difficulties that associate face in their workplaces. The following graph identifies these problems and the findings could be used to reduce and eliminate future such problems.
PROBLEMS OF APPLYING STAR ON THE JOB

Figure 4.1 Reasons for not applying STAR standards in the workplace

It is clear from Figure 4.1 that at W Sydney and Westin Sydney the lack of job opportunities became the main reason that associates could not apply STAR on the job. At Four Points hotel, lack of managerial and supervisory support was seen as the obstacle for not applying STAR on the job. ‘Other reason’ was the foremost cause for not applying STAR on the job at Sheraton Park. Respondents with comments expanded the ‘other reason’ response as can be seen in the following list of comments.
“OTHER REASONS”

“Lack of managerial and supervisory support”

“Manager and supervisor do not encourage nor appreciate the good things that staff does, even after the training”. (Sheraton On The Park)

I think that the benefits of STAR entirely depend on the persons and their enthusiasm but as a whole I do not think that it has made any grave differences. (Sheraton On The Park)

“It would be beneficial to have more on the job reminders, encouragement, and examples of how we can do and how we are doing well”. (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“We have heard nothing since training”. (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“STAR is not being applied because there seems to be no high person supporting this. Nothing in our hotel/department has changed. We still do things the same good and bad. I am not saying training is useless, but you have to implement what you teach, if you don’t it’s just a waste of time and associates will challenge the benefits of doing this training”. (The Westin Sydney)

“In fact more associates have lost motivation. They see STAR as a fruitless exercise. Just so management can have a uniform workforce. It has not actually improved our hospitality skills and I doubt that the most important people, “the guests”, have benefited from my training. Personally, I question whether Stanwood “REALLY” cares”. (The Westin Sydney)

“Less contact with guests”

“I do not get that much contact with the hotel guests”. (Sheraton On The Park)

“Do not care”

“Why bother? I take situations I can handle into my own hands and deal with it how I feel”. (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“STAR was a common sense. Customer satisfaction is obviously what hospitality is all about and therefore the course was a waste of time”. (W Sydney)

“Lack of directions”

“There has been no follow up beyond one training session. My job is not as a front office worker. The training given to me did not clearly identify how to apply STAR service to my role”. (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)
"Once again, the training session is great. But it is not enough. I have no idea how to take STAR service and apply it practically to my job. I have not heard any more about Starwood cares since my training 5 months ago and there is no support or continual follow up to help me implement what I learnt. And since no managers seem to understand Starwood cares, how can I"? (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

"Lack of practical implication"

For me STAR was reacquainting with things I already knew. (The Westin Sydney)

STAR is a very theoretical based, which should be applied practically and uniquely to each department. (The Westin Sydney)

"Inadequate staff"

"Lack of staffing levels to sustain high level of service.". (W Sydney)

Despite the difficulties of transferring learning at each hotel, respondents indicated that the training had many benefits. These are outlined in Table 4.10.
### Table 4.10  Benefits of applying STAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased motivation</td>
<td>23 (45%)</td>
<td>34 (60%)</td>
<td>61 (55%)</td>
<td>17 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased enthusiasm</td>
<td>23 (45%)</td>
<td>27 (47%)</td>
<td>56 (50%)</td>
<td>13 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased win-win solution</td>
<td>24 (47%)</td>
<td>20 (35%)</td>
<td>46 (41%)</td>
<td>14 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved customer service</td>
<td>25 (49%)</td>
<td>38 (67%)</td>
<td>82 (73%)</td>
<td>18 (53%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communication between departments</td>
<td>21 (41%)</td>
<td>23 (40%)</td>
<td>51 (46%)</td>
<td>12 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communications between managers</td>
<td>15 (25%)</td>
<td>19 (33%)</td>
<td>33 (35%)</td>
<td>9 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved communications between associates</td>
<td>24 (47%)</td>
<td>27 (47%)</td>
<td>57 (51%)</td>
<td>15 (44%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved teamwork between departments</td>
<td>20 (39%)</td>
<td>23 (40%)</td>
<td>53 (47%)</td>
<td>14 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved teamwork between managers</td>
<td>11 (22%)</td>
<td>15 (26%)</td>
<td>29 (26%)</td>
<td>9 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved teamwork between associates</td>
<td>19 (37%)</td>
<td>20 (35%)</td>
<td>55 (49%)</td>
<td>14 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased understanding of SPC</td>
<td>18 (35%)</td>
<td>22 (39%)</td>
<td>49 (44%)</td>
<td>11 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None - no benefits</td>
<td>3 (6%)</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (4%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.10 shows that associates have reported that their customer service skills have improved. Improved customer service was the most frequently identified benefit (e.g., 49% at Sheraton Park; 67% at Four Points; 73% at Westin Sydney; and 53% at W Sydney). This indicated that one of the STAR course objectives, in part, was achieved.

As mentioned previously, it is also imperative to have managers' involvement in this project to determine whether associates have improved their performance after they undertook STAR service standards.
4.6.2 Managers

As stated earlier, to complement the associates' responses, the managers were surveyed concerning the performances of associates once they had undergone training. The next Table shows the department which each responding hotel manager was supervising.

Table 4.11 Departments of the responding managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concierge/bell</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front office/reception</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewarding</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In room dining</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bars</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banquets</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All groups</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92
The Table above shows the number and percentage of responding managers from each hotel. The 10 people from Sheraton Park constituted 15 per cent of the sample, 25 people from Four Points constituted 37 per cent of the sample, 21 people from Westin Sydney constituted 31 per cent of the sample and 11 people from W Sydney constituted 16 per cent of the sample.

It is necessary to find out how managers' perceived STAR service standards. The following figure shows the rating of STAR service standards concepts from each hotel.

Figure 4.2 The percentage of manager respondents from each hotel who have rated the STAR service standards.

![Bar chart showing percentage of manager respondents from each hotel](chart.png)

Figure 4.2 shows that the majority of managers (more than 50%) reported that they perceived STAR service standards as good. This may indicate that the STAR concept can achieve customer service satisfaction.

The positive view of STAR held by the managers suggests they are likely to believe that training in STAR improves associates' performances.
The next tables show firstly, managers' appraisal of associates job knowledge; secondly, associates customer relations as well as communication skills; and finally, perceived benefits.

**JOB KNOWLEDGE**

The following table shows managers' appraisals of associates increased job knowledge of in relation to the importance of Standard Profit Chain (SPC) and STAR service standards after training.

Table 4.12 Managers agreement on the associates have increased job knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Sheraton Park</th>
<th>Four Points</th>
<th>Westin Sydney</th>
<th>W Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
<td>N %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of SPC</td>
<td>10 100%</td>
<td>24 96%</td>
<td>21 100%</td>
<td>10 91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAR service standards</td>
<td>10 100%</td>
<td>10 100%</td>
<td>21 100%</td>
<td>11 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 shows that almost all managers from each hotel strongly agreed or agreed to the statement that associates have increased knowledge of the SPC and the STAR service standards after completing the training program. If this is so, then it might be expected that managers believe associates' performances demonstrate STAR procedure after their training. The following table shows managers' perceptions of associates' performances after STAR training.
### CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Table 4.13 Customer relations and communication skills of STAR trained associates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sheraton Park</td>
<td>Four Points</td>
<td>Westin Sydney</td>
<td>W Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved smile and greet</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
<td>N 23 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better talk and listen</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
<td>N 22 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet customers’ needs</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
<td>N 24 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet customers’ expectation</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
<td>N 23 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolve problems</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak more clearly</td>
<td>N 6 %</td>
<td>N 23 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak more politely</td>
<td>N 6 %</td>
<td>N 23 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct body language</td>
<td>N 7 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control tone of voice</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 21 %</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make eye contact</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
<td>N 24 %</td>
<td>N 20 %</td>
<td>N 8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 shows that most managers strongly agreed or agreed with statements that associates’ performances in customer relations and communication skills had improved on the job after STAR training and this confirms that associates know STAR. This suggests that associates have transferred STAR to their jobs. The benefits of this learning transfer as perceived by managers are shown in the next figure.
Figure 4.3 Managers perceived benefits of STAR training of associates

Figure 4.3 shows that managers perceived that there are multiple benefits of the STAR training program as indicated by their view of the performance outcomes of trained associates. The biggest (60%) benefit was perceived to be improved service followed by increased positive feedback (58%) and then increased Guest Satisfaction index (52%).

The next figures provide a comparison of average rating (mean) between the hotel sector in terms of the associates’ reported job knowledge and customer relations as well as communication skills and benefits of STAR service standards.
Figure 4.4 shows that Westin Sydney appears to have experienced the best results from STAR in terms of its associates' reported benefit of job knowledge, customer relations and communication skills. Similarly, it scored the highest in benefits from STAR as reported by managers. The remaining hotels were closely grouped in their responses and all these were positives. In addition, managers also stated that there were certain areas of STAR which needed to be further improved and outlined some possible future improvements related to content, duration and presentation.

The following figure shows some areas that each hotel indicates needs attention for future STAR programs.
Figure 4.5 shows that the manager from each hotel has different suggestions for the improvement of STAR programs. The duration was most frequently identified as needing change at Westin Sydney (36%), whereas the content was most frequently identified as needing change at Four Points (35%). On the other hand, the content, the duration and "other" were similarly identified as needing change at W Sydney (30%). The content, the duration and the presentation were equally frequently identified as needing change at Sheraton Park (33%). This suggests that each hotel needs to update its STAR program to remain competitive in the future environment while maintaining the current level of customer service. 'Other' suggestions were expanded by hotel managers (see the following list of suggestions).
“OTHER SUGGESTIONS”

“Content”

“Starwood cares changed from a four-day to a half-day and this means less content.” (Sheraton On The Park).

“Structure to ensure training is implemented in department” (The Westin Sydney)

“Other – work environment”

“I believe we should see morale change if we have other platforms in place, e.g.: correct staffing levels. We must provide the correct environment for the STAR service standards to be executed by our associates” (Sheraton On The Park).

“I think the awareness of the standards has improved and thus attitude and culture can be seen to be improving. We just need to create the environment for STAR service to succeed” (Sheraton On The Park).

“Follow up/practical element (so everyone practices the theory before they forget it)” (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“Follow up with department” (The Westin Sydney)

“Follow up with associates” (W Sydney)

“Presentation”

“Presentation can be condescending in delivery” (Sheraton On The Park)

“Some sessions should include both managers and associates together in order to strengthen the bond between the two and improve team bonding” (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“Take time to drive department specific “STAR” applications. Could use departmental supervisors to help associates understand and apply “STAR better” (Four Points by Sheraton Sydney)

“Duration”

“STAR should be conducted over few days, shorter time each day and possibly workshops” (W Sydney)
4.7 Discussion

As stated earlier, some new associates come to the job capable of most of the skills and with most of the knowledge required to start work. Others may have need of extensive training before they are ready to make a contribution to organisations. While training may be accomplished on an informal basis, better results are usually achieved through a well-organised, formal training program or on-the-job development-training program. Training program efforts must be systematically evaluated to determine whether the desired outcomes have been achieved (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Evaluation of training material serves many goals that can provide useful information on how the program can be improved, helps pinpoint particular difficulties in the organisation and implementation of the event, identifies which training methods are most effective, and assesses the relevance of the program for the participants through improved knowledge and skills.

Some training practitioners have adopted Kirkpatrick's four levels (level one is reaction, level two is learning, level three is behaviour, and level four is organisational results), as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation. In addition, Kirkpatrick's levels of training evaluation appear to be systematic steps towards the evaluation of training programs. Evaluation of each level requires the evaluation of preceding levels.

This research demonstrated a straightforward Kirkpatrick's evaluation strategy to determine the impact of STAR service standards to associates at four hotels in Sydney. The results indicate that associates' reaction (reaction level) to the course objectives, the course content and the course usefulness and its relevance is very favourable. It can be seen in Table 4.5, Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 that nearly all associates (approximately 90%
of each hotel respondents) have indicated that the course objectives were achieved, the content was very helpful as well as applicable. The research findings support this by saying that the more the training content and program reflect the workplace, the more successful the transfer of the learning.

Although participant reactions to STAR training are clearly not the sole indicator of its effectiveness, it is possible that their reactions represent one aspect that influences STAR effectiveness (Kirkpatrick's reaction level). Trainees' reactions can play a role in building interest and attention and enhancing motivation to learn (Patrick, 1992). Reactions to training play an important role in learning and the trainer plays an important task in assisting associates during the session as the trainer facilitates and motivates learning transfer. Trainees who are taught by the trainer how to apply new knowledge and skills in a job context should have the ability to transfer learning which, when combined with 'motivation to transfer' and 'positive transfer conditions', is likely to result in greater transfer. Thus, it is important to find out the trainer's effectiveness.

This research also describes the investigation of the trainer's effectiveness. If the trainer was found to be effective in the sense of having in depth knowledge of the content, being able to motivate associates and giving practical examples, then, it could help associates to learn quickly and this could lead to increased knowledge, improved skills and a positive attitude on the job. Table 6 shows that almost all associates (more than 90%) agreed that the trainer's involvement helped them to learn and to apply STAR to the job. If associates can understand the principles and concepts of STAR (Kirkpatrick's learning level) and if they also have a chance to try out the training programs exercises in their workplaces, they are more likely to apply their newly acquired skills when back on the job. It appears that the greater the specificity about where and how the training is to be applied to the job, the more likely is successful transfer of learning.
Table 4.9 indicates that nearly every associate (approximately 90%) stated they have confidently applied STAR service standards to their job (Kirkpatrick’s behaviour level). This is to say that learning in STAR training is related to the performance of transfer behaviours to the job which can impact on organisational results.

Even though almost all associates (approximately 90%) successfully applied STAR on the job, a few associates have outlined some problems when implementing STAR in their workplaces. They state that no job opportunities and lack of managerial and supervisory supports are the main reasons for not applying STAR on the job (Figure 4.1). In addition, only a few associates (N = 19 or 30%) indicated that infrequent contact with hotel guests, insufficient practical examples or inadequate staff to maintain service standards were problems.

Regardless of the difficulties of transferring STAR training, associates indicate that the training provided many benefits (Kirkpatrick’s result level). These are outlined in Table 4.10 and one of the benefits which was nominated most frequently was improved customer service (49 % at Sheraton Park; 67% at Four Points; 73% at Westin Sydney; and 53% at W Sydney).

This study demonstrates that a positive outcome at the first level of Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model, reactions, can enhance associates’ motivations to learn. When this is combined with encouragement to apply the learning (positive work environment), it can lead to an impact on organisational results. Studies by Broad and Newstrom, (1992); Baldwin and Ford, (1988); Jones and Bowler, (1997); Kirkpatrick (1998); Robotham, (1999); Sullivan (2000); Lashley, (2001); Machles (2002) have suggested ways in which favourable reactions to a training program can facilitate learning transfer.
To validate the findings, this research also sought managers’ appraisals of associates’ performances after STAR training. The majority of managers (more than 50%) perceived STAR service standards as good (Figure 4.2). This positive reaction (Kirkpatrick’s reaction level) may indicate that the STAR concept can lead to customer service satisfaction.

This positive reaction to STAR suggests that managers might be expected to believe that training in STAR improves associates’ performances. This was investigated through identifying associates’ job knowledge, associates’ customer relations as well as communication skills of STAR. Table 4.12 shows that almost all managers (approximately 90%) supported the statement that associates had increased knowledge of the SPC and the STAR service standards after completing STAR training program (Kirkpatrick’s learning level). If this is so, then it might be expected also that managers believe associates can apply STAR procedures on the job. As discussed earlier, if positive trainees’ reactions can play a role in enhancing interest, attention, and building motivation to learn, in conjunction with managerial and supervisory support, then this might influence trainees’ transfer of learning on the job. In addition, as Table 4.7 shows, most associates (more than 90%) admitted that STAR is useful, practical and relevant to their jobs. Table 4.13 shows that more than half of managers (60%) agreed that associates’ work performances (Kirkpatrick’s behaviour level) improved following STAR training. This validated what associates said previously that they had applied STAR on the job. In addition, Figure 4.3 also supports this. This figure shows the perceived benefits after associates applied STAR (Kirkpatrick’s result level). Managers confirmed that, in addition to improved service, other benefits also followed such as increased positive guests’ feedback and increased approval noted on the Guest Satisfaction Survey. The average rating score for job knowledge, customer relations, and
communication skills is 3.00 indicating that managers agreed that associates had applied STAR and as a result provided benefits to each hotel (Figure 4.4).

Because the hotel sector’s business environment is rapidly changing and each hotel needs to remain competitive in the future, managers have outlined some possible areas of the training they feel needs to be expanded. These are the course content, duration, and presentation (Figure 4.5).

It can be said that as a result of associates attending STAR training, associates improved their skills, gained knowledge, had positive attitudes and, more importantly, transferred their learning to their jobs. Consequently, their performance contributed to organisational benefits. Therefore, STAR service standards training conducted at four hotels in Sydney appears to be effective in these areas.
4.8 Research implications

The current research has a number of implications for the hotel sector. Firstly, this research indicates that in order to conduct training evaluation, the period immediately after training completed is very important to obtain trainees' reactions to the course content, the course usefulness and its relevance to meet their needs which can be used to indicate their willingness to learn. After that, their readiness to learn combined with the trainer's ability to give practical examples during the session and managerial as well supervisory support to transfer can assist trainees to transfer learning to their workplaces. As a consequence, this can lead to an impact on organisational performance. If managers are able to apply Kirkpatrick's four levels continuously, the training programs conducted are perceived to be effective.

Secondly, the results suggest that Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model can be implemented to determine the effectiveness of any hotel training activities. To strengthen the evaluation results, managers' and supervisor' participation seems necessary to gauge training effectiveness.

The research has been limited to investigating only four hotels in Sydney. Consequently, the results may not be generalisable very widely. Even though it was not the aim of this research, it would be better if Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model was used to investigate training outcomes at many hotels to strengthen understanding of the applicability of Kirkpatrick's model to various hotels and numerous service sectors.
CONCLUSION

Even though the response results were limited, this research provided valid empirical findings and demonstrated how associates have transferred learning to their jobs. From the findings, it appears that managers in the hospitality industry in general and the hotel sector in particular, are becoming more aware of the need to understand their associates’ reactions to the training programs provided. While there are obvious advantages in understanding associates’ reactions, it is the linking of those reactions to learning and job performance in day-to-day activities that is a potential major contribution to benefit organisational benefits performance.

There is an interesting finding from some associates who stated that lack of managerial and supervisory support have become reasons for transfer learning difficulties. As previously mentioned, this research suggests that after training the more encouragement trainees receive to apply the training, the more successful the transfer, with potential consequences for organisational bottom lines.

This study shows that Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model can be implemented in the hotel sector; and one may argue that it may also be workable in various other service organisations.
CHAPTER 5  KIRKPATRICK’S MODEL IN THE HOTEL SECTOR: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

“You are about to embark on a fascinating journey that involves commitment, leadership, skills, and a passion for service. Look to the sky and that is the limit” (Stephen N. Sharp, General Manager New Orleans Marriott Hotel cited in Brymer, 2000: 4).

One of the greatest demands on the hotel sector is to increase productivity, while simultaneously maintaining or improving customer satisfaction. Service quality depends on training (Iverson, 1995), particularly training for front line associates in the area of customer service training (Melia, 1992) which can support the hotel sector strategy to remain competitive in today’s environment. Sometimes training activities can act as enablers to carry out strategic initiatives. That is, a hotel’s training programs can support the attainment of a hotel’s objectives. If these activities are well planned and fully implemented, they too can enhance the human resource plan and support the strategic direction of the company.

Dowell (1995) discussed the role of training in the Australian hospitality industry and concluded that the link between productivity and training investment is at the enterprise level. Dowell concluded that studies of effective Australian service sector enterprises show that they devote more attention to training and attempt to recruit more highly skilled and qualified workers. Training is essential to service industries because organisations rely on employee knowledge, skill, and initiative to identify and resolve problems and to ensure superior standards of customer care. Forrester (2000) suggests that this capability can be acquired through formal training or education. For instance, training and development may well yield greater skills and knowledge, but unless they
link these improved skills to rewards and career opportunities, employers run the risk of losing trained staff to other organisations (Deery, 1999).

Furthermore, associates who are trained are more likely to be committed to employers who are also willing to support their long-term career development and personal career aspirations (Buick and Muthu, 1997; Dessler, 1999; Nankervis et al., 1999; Deery, 1999; Hoque, 2000; Nankervis et al., 2002). A study in the United Kingdom revealed that hospitality workers felt it was important for managers to take an interest in associates’ future careers (Hoque, 2000). They also believed that it was necessary to train existing staff to fill new positions, often as promotions (Buick and Muthu, 1997; Deery, 1999; Hoque, 2000). Although no hotel can guarantee job security, incurring costs associated with training and developing associates without giving them some prospect of promotion or job security may indeed be self-defeating (Dessler, 1999).

Nevertheless, it can be said that despite ‘some forces’ shaping the future of the hospitality industry and particularly in the hotel sector, such as limited labour markets and downsizing, and increasing customer demand for an excellent price and/or value ratio, the hotel sector’s training for front line associates in the provision of outstanding customer service, remains significant. In addition, as stated on Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, training that is directly relevant to the workplace is seen as imperative to ensure training is useful and supports front associates to deliver outstanding service.

The prevalence, expense, and strategic importance of associates’ development activities suggest that training program activities need to be monitored on an ongoing basis (Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1998). What is most needed for training of front line associates to succeed is to build an evaluation component into the training process (Schupp, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Nankervis et al., 1999; Nankervis et al., 2002).
In theory, training evaluation has to provide a kind of feedback loop (Easterby-Smith and Mackness, 1992) and one of the most widely used training evaluation model is Kirkpatrick’s four training evaluation levels (Alliger et al., 1997).

The major part of this research is concerned with a detailed analysis of the usefulness of Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation levels at Starwood hotels for identifying the different training evaluation levels such as reactions, learning, behaviour and results.

A participant’s reactions sought to ensure whether training provided was relevant to the workplace, the course contents were applicable, provided new ideas in assisting associates to do the job better, and the trainer’s effectiveness assisted facilitate and motivate learning transfer. As mentioned previously, if an individual associates’ reactions were favourable, then it can be said Starwood training program, in part, was achieved.

Other studies have also noted the potential influence on application of learner perceptions. Learners are unlikely to use new learning if they view the programs they attend as poorly designed and delivered, irrelevant to their needs, and impractical to apply (Dixon, 1990; Broad and Newstrom, 1992; Holton III, 1996; Burke, 1997; Burke and Baldwin, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Cooke, 2000).

As the research findings demonstrate, the importance of obtaining associates’ reactions is based on the assumption that favourable reactions imply useful learning or will predict changes in behaviour or higher levels of effectiveness. Even though Kirkpatrick (1998) does not make this assumption, some who have subsequently published similar schemes appear to do so (Hamblin, 1974; Alliger and Janak, 1989; Bramley and Kitson, 1994; Kaufman and Keller, 1994; Holton III, 1996; Holton III et al., 1997; Bramley, 1996; Alliger et al., 1997; Abernathy, 1999).
In addition, the material presented in Chapter 4 addresses systematic training evaluation levels where each level provides different information that can be used as a predictor of the subsequent levels.

The current study suggests that many training practitioners and/or training evaluators questioned the validity of Kirkpatrick’s four levels; particularly in the area of trainees’ reactions which functioned as a moderator of the relationship between training motivation and learning as well as a mediator of the other three levels (e.g., Mathieu et al., 1992; Alliger and Janak, 1989; Chapter 4 Table 4.5 shows more than 90% of hotels’ associates reacted favourably, Table 4.6 shows more than 75% of hotels’ associates agreed about STAR Service Standards content and Table 4.7 shows more than 80% of hotels’ associates agreed about course relevance and usefulness). As Halton III (1996) argues, trainees’ reactions remain important (Kirkpatrick reaction level) and he also states that more positive reactions to training may aid learning. Moreover, the role of trainers in motivating trainees to learn has also contributed to supporting learning and transferring learning to their workplaces (e.g., Holton III, 1996; Chapter 4 Table 4.8 shows more than 70% of hotels’ associates have positive views of the trainer and Table 4.9 shows 90% of hotels’ associates have applied STAR service standards to their job). This was supported by hotel managers (Chapter 4 Table 4.13 shows more than 70% of hotels’ managers agreed that associates’ performances had improved).

The notion of meeting trainees’ expectations and desires for training has also received support in the literature (e.g., Hicks and Klimoski, 1987; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas and Canon-Bowers, 1991). Those trainees who feel the training will meet their needs will be motivated and likely to learn (e.g., Holton III, 1996; Chapter 4 Table 4.5 shows more than 90% of hotels’ associates reacted favourably, Table 4.6 shows more than 75% of hotels’ associates agreed about STAR Service Standards content and Table 4.7 shows
more than 80% of hotels' associates agreed about course relevance and usefulness). Starwood hotel chain appears to fulfil their associates' expectations of this need for training.

More importantly, as discussed earlier, the more the training content and program reflect the workplace, the more successful is the transfer of the learning (Robotham, 1999). The current research shows that STAR training programs are perceived by associates and managers as relevant to each hotel front line associates' work environments (Chapter 4 Table 4.5 shows more than 90% of hotels' associates reacted favourably, Table 4.6 shows more than 75% of hotels' associates agreed about STAR Service Standards content and Table 4.7 shows more than 80% of hotels' associates agreed about course relevance and usefulness, Table 4.12 shows more than 90% of hotels' managers agreed that associates have increased knowledge of the SPC and the STAR service standards after completing the training program and Table 4.13 shows more than 70% of hotels' managers agreed that associates' performances had improved).

The most difficult challenge faced by the hotel sector in providing service is the impact of associates' attitudes. A guest has the potential to interact with so many different associates at so many times of the day and one inappropriate attitude can snowball into a negative memory. Thus it is important to meet and exceed guests' expectations at all times (Kirkpatrick learning level). If the hotel sector is able to meet and exceed customers' expectation, the industry is likely to achieve a good reputation in the eyes of customers. In recognition for the need to meet and to exceed customers' expectations, the hotel sector is no longer simply a provider of lodging or sleeping accommodation. Hotels are in the business of providing experiences and solving guests' problems, whatever they may be. Starwood hotel chains have conducted STAR training programs (see Chapter 4 Table 4.9 shows 90% of hotels' associates state that they have applied
STAR service standards to their job) to develop associates’ capacities to meet and to exceed guests’ needs and wants. As this relationship suggests, a hotel organisation is comprised of a portfolio of products and services that exist in a given environment and elicit a certain set of behaviours among the hotel’s staff. Guests, on the other hand, have multiple objectives, needs and wants that must be met. All this can change at any given time based on the situation, the experience sought, and the community with which the guest is presently associated. The idea is to match the supply with demand; that is, a hotel that can fulfil guest’s needs, wants, and objectives to a level of satisfaction dictated by the guest.

Empowerment has been associated with a number of benefits including increased associates’ morale, commitment and customer satisfaction (Bowen, 1998). The increased customer satisfaction comes through better complaint resolution, the ability to customise products, and a more responsive service (Kirkpatrick behaviour level). According to Bowen and Lawler (1992:39) in a typical service environment, empowerment may result in "quicker on-line responses to customer needs and dissatisfied customers during service recovery ... associates interacting with customers with more warmth and enthusiasm; associates offering new service ideas, and greater word-of-mouth customer retention". Empowered individuals also have a high level of involvement (Lashley, 1996, 2001; Corsun and Enz, 1999; Forrester, 2000; Campbell, 2000). This also makes a difference to the organisation’s performance because involved associates generally give more effort or support than their formal contractual obligations require (Stewart and McGoldrick, 1996 cited in Lowry et al., 2002).

However, one problem in the implementation of empowerment can be a lack of management and supervisor support. Associates at Starwood hotel chains raised the lack of managerial and supervisory support as one of the barriers to transferring their
learning to their workplaces (see Chapter 4 Figure 1 shows at W Sydney and Westin Sydney the lack of job opportunities became the main reason that associates could not apply STAR on the job. At Four Points hotel, lack of managerial and supervisory support was seen as the obstacle for not applying STAR on the job and the 'other' description analysis).

Nevertheless, associates and managers confirmed that regardless of this barrier, both parties have received benefits as a result of applying some of STAR service standards to the workplace (Kirkpatrick results level). In addition, the success of conducting training is determined by trainees' application of their learning to their workplaces (Chapter 4 Table 4.9 shows 90% of hotels' associates state that they have applied STAR service standards to their job) and this was confirmed by the managers' evaluations of work performances (Chapter 4 Table 4.12 shows more than 90% of hotels' managers agreed that associates have increased knowledge of the SPC and the STAR service standards after completing the training program, Table 4.13 shows more than 70% of hotels' managers agreed that associates' performances had improved). According to Kirkpatrick's training evaluation model, these results indicate that STAR training program conducted at Starwood hotel chains is effective.

Much of the literature on training, training evaluation and strategic human resource management focuses on the importance of evaluation. However, as earlier discussed, the bulk of this is concerned mainly with the worth of doing evaluation and the need to evaluate the training program after training is completed. Indeed, as stated earlier, little information is available on the usefulness of implementing Kirkpatrick's theory of evaluation in the service sector, particularly in the hotel sector. In those instances where this has been discussed, the evaluation focus is only on obtaining trainees' reactions. The discussion appears biased in the absence of a comprehensive analysis of the full
implementation of Kirkpatrick’s four levels, described earlier. Certainly, this is the real challenge for determining the effectiveness of Kirkpatrick’s model. Despite the complexity of the hotel sector’s work environments, increased new technologies, changed customers’ perceptions of service quality, increased casualisation of employment, security problems, and globalisation, training is as seen the best tool to bolster outstanding service, so its evaluation must be systematically conducted.

Chapter 2 examines the nature of the tourism and hospitality industry including its various definitions, issues, the importance of training programs for front line associates and its elements as well as the programs offered need to match with the strategic business objectives. In addition, this chapter examines training in the hotel sector and the benefits of the effectiveness of management of human resources in the area of selection, training and rewards. Sophisticated human resource management practices stipulate that in order to be effective the HR activities of an organisation must be linked to an overall corporate strategy and one of the most crucial activities is training. As this paper suggests, attention also needs to be focused on the evaluation training programs to determine the extent to which they achieve this objective.

Chapter 3 canvasses the need of the hotel sector to recognise, identify and develop strategies for evaluating its training program in response to regular changes in customers’ demands for quality depending on their backgrounds. The understanding and application of Kirkpatrick’s theory and practices, in association with HR strategies in the hotel sector, is important. However, regardless of the problems of the model, Kirkpatrick’s four levels offer straightforward guidelines with which to commence evaluation practices. Kirkpatrick (1996, 1998) support this by saying the purpose of his model is to clarify the meaning of evaluation and offer guidelines on how to get started and proceed.
In addition, Chapters 3 and 4 address the application of an analytical framework or conceptual model which encourages hotel managers and/or training practitioners to determine training program's effectiveness which can lead to improvement or termination of the program. An important feature of Kirkpatrick's model is that it recognises that each level supplies different information that is useful and beneficial to managers, trainers, and trainees. The end product of any training programs should, necessarily, be tailored into organisational bottom lines that have been outlined by HRM (Deery, 1999). Furthermore, responses from training evaluation feedback can be used to address immediate performance crises (if any) and ultimately can become part of strategic plans for maintaining the hotels' reputation in a global business environment.

The lessons from this particular piece of research are several:

1. Because of the complexity of the tourism and the hospitality industry, particularly in the hotel sector, as a matter of urgency, there needs to be more precise training for front line associates;

2. Regardless of unexpected changes in the hotel sector business environment, the connection between HRM and performance can be established via commitment and service quality. In this context, front line associates need to know if hotel managers are prepared to support front line associates' performance through training.

3. Thorough data collection, the encouragement of conducting rigorous training evaluation and the application of Kirkpatrick's four levels to evaluate training programs should become an 'essential' exercise for hotel managers and/or training practitioners.
4. The efficacy of the implementation of Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model in the hotel sector in Sydney, should be tested in a number of service industries as well as at numerous other hotels in order to gauge its straightforwardness and determine whether Kirkpatrick’s model needs to be expanded.

5. An appropriate blend of Kirkpatrick’s four level model possibly with industry specific amendments (if available) combined with broader HRM approaches and appropriate techniques of delivering training, should become an ultimate ‘weapon’ to maintain levels of service.

6. Arguments against evaluating training programs based on the difficulties this entails may be obsolete. Given the empirical evidence discussed earlier, hotel managers and/or training practitioners should ensure that training evaluation can be accomplished.

Overall, it is apparent that Kirkpatrick’s model is successfully demonstrated in the Starwood hotel chain, and there is every likelihood that the same model can be implemented in different service sectors.

"People today want value for the money that they are spending and they want great service. If they don’t get either, they won’t give you a second chance," said Clark. "It all starts and ends with people. They are the heart, the soul and the spirit of our company" (Carolyn Clark, HR Vice President at Fairmont Hotel, Toronto cited in Langlois, 2001: 19)

As stated earlier, tourism and the hospitality industry appear to rely on international socio economic and political stability. The tourism business, in particular, appears to be facing turbulent changes in the immediate and wider context of leisure and travel (Muller, 2001). Not only has the new consumer gone into top gear, society as a whole has become ever more fragmented (Nankervis, 2000; Muller, 2001).

In the previous chapter, it was stated that political boundaries are being weakened to be replaced by others (e.g. the need to understand relationships between regions, maintain political stability and peace between continents). In addition, as the result of worldwide globalisation mechanisms, "the world is turning into a ‘global village’ with a uniform, commercialised culture, and what was regarded as ecological stability appears to be becoming increasingly unstable" (Muller, 2001: 62). In addition, Muller (2001: 62 – 64) has outlined three issues facing the tourism industry as follows:

1. "The challenge of the changing climate

   Many places are already virtually at their ecological limits and the consequences of this will become increasingly visible and tangible over the next few years. On the other hand, the process of environmental awareness is continuing among
broad segments of the population. Holidaymakers, too, are becoming more and more environmentally conscious are particularly sensitive to environmental damage when it threatens to spoil their holiday pleasure.

Thus, the dilemma facing tourism is particularly great because tourism, with its high transport energy consumption generates a large proportion of greenhouse gases especially as the distances travelled are growing longer while stays are becoming progressively shorter. As discussed earlier, the transportation sector seems ‘fragile’ in tourism as it faces capacity constraints.

2. The challenge of mobility

With little probability of major adjustments to transport infrastructure and in view of the poor coordination of school holiday arrangements in Europe, this will involuntarily but inevitably result in even greater traffic problems and in total traffic chaos, particularly when it comes to holiday traffic. Nevertheless, little change in mobility patterns can be expected from the majority of people. Holiday traffic jams have established themselves as part of the vacation ritual. The percentage of people suffering from mobility exhaustion will rise more and more. As discussed earlier, the importance of government and private sector involvement in providing transportation sector is imperative.

3. Changing travel habits

Upheavals in the immediate and less immediate environment of the leisure conscious person also affects their travel and holiday habits. Horst W. Opaschowski (1995: 22 cited in Muller, 2001: 66) described the holiday of the future as follows:

- “Attractive natural setting and clean landscapes are automatically expected;
- People will continue to seek sun, beaches and the sea;
- ‘Artificial holiday’ paradises will become tomorrow’s standard holiday venues’;
- Holiday hopping (here today – there tomorrow) will spread"

Changing travel habits can be seen as a growing phenomenon in the tourism industry, particularly, in Australia as it promotes regional tourist attractions. As mentioned earlier, the Australian government recently launched the ‘See Australia’ campaign that promotes the natural beauty of its environment. Crucial to the development of Australian tourism is a realisation that tourism, like any other product, “is subject to a life cycle” (Hall, 1998: 327). Further, Hall (1995: 327) states “the success of inbound tourism in 1980s and early 1990s is no guarantee that tourism will grow in the future”. However, this may not be true, because the Australian Tourist Commission is spending $10 million on marketing Australia in the US alone (the Tourism Task Force, 2002 cited in the SMH, 25 January 2002) and as stated earlier, according to the WTO the number of tourist arrivals in Australia is forecast to bounce back in 2003.

In line with Muller’s (2001) issues related to the future of tourism, it appears that sustainability and long term tourism development require not only an environmentally responsible industry, but also the incorporation of broader community and social concerns in the development of tourist opportunities. Sustainability implies more equitable decision-making participation by these groups. As noted earlier, the importance of the government’s role in developing tourism policies can be seen as a way of meeting challenges to tourism in the future. The involvement of the private sector is also important in maintaining the industry.
The hotel sector, on the one hand, is likely to be a multi-use facility that serves as a focal point for community activity, much like a shopping complex (Muller, 2001). As stated previously, the hotel sector now facilitates travellers with mixed-use facilities containing retail outlets, restaurants, meeting and recreational space along with hotel accommodation, comfortable lounges, and direct access to tourist attractions, Internet and private cars for distinguished guests. In addition, Connolly and Olsen, (2001: 73) stated, “business traveller’s demands for Internet super highway, fax machines, photocopy machines and private phone lines have contributed to the hotel sector’s rapid development”. In addition Connolly and Olsen (2001: 73) said, “over time, the industry is likely to see additional offerings such as educational facilities, video conferencing, sporting facilities, cinemas, and office rentals”. Likewise, Connolly and Olsen, (2001: 73 – 93) have outlined several broad questions that the future hospitality industry needs to consider for its future:

1. “What new management models will be necessary to guide hospitality organisations effectively in the future?

   - With all the changes in the hospitality industry occurring as a result of globalisation and advancing technology, what should be the core products and services offered by hospitality enterprises, and how should they be priced?

   - What methods should be used when marketing to guests? How will hospitality firms attract and communicate with customers as a result of new communications technologies and consumer trends, especially if they are automated end-to end?

   - What will be the functionality needs, services and amenities of hotel guests in a high-tech world, particularly as their needs for home, office, education and
entertainment converge? Can hospitality firms charge premiums for providing these services?

2. How does the industry meet the value-adding requirements for the stakeholders of tomorrow’s industry (i.e. customers, suppliers, providers, owners and investors)?

As discussed formerly, travellers want to obtain memorable experiences while staying at a particular hotel and at the same time receive service quality. In a high-tech world, associates also need specific technology training (Deery,1999) to support their daily jobs. In order to deliver and to maintain levels of service, hotel management needs to provide training for front line associates and ensure that the training programs are properly evaluated. Conolly and Olsen, (2001: 73 – 93) have also outlined some extensive questions that the future hospitality industry needs to contemplate for its future:

1. “What are the skills and training requirements necessary to function effectively in the future business models resulting from the forces driving change?

2. What changes must be made in education and training programmes to prepare future managers adequately for a high-tech world that awaits?

   • What will these new educational programmes and training programmes look like?

   • How will they be delivered?

   • What skills and core competencies are most critical to master?
• How will current managers make the transition into this new environment and assume new roles where then can effectively take advantage of the new technology workplace?

3. What models and methods should be used to evaluate and measure investments in information technologies?

• How can hospitality firms effectively and reliably evaluate the benefits that will be derived from a proposed investment in technology?

• How will the effectiveness and value of training to utilise new technology be measured?"

In addition, Nankervis et al.,(1999: 340) and Nankervis et al., (2002: 338) also raise the following issues regarding HRM and training:

1. "Instead of spending a great deal of money on training, would it not be better to spend on the recruitment and selection of associates beyond their current level of job duties?"

2. To what extent should it be the employers responsibility to determine the training needs of individuals in organisations"?

As the previous chapter pointed out, a high quality service depends upon personnel and training programs should assist associates to accomplish their tasks. In line with discussions earlier, training programs should be highly relevant to work environment Robotham (1999). In conjunction with Robotham’s (1999) approaches combined with the research findings, this paper suggests three methods to achieve this. Firstly, front line associates can be trained technically with skills in delivering the kinds of products
and services needed and wanted by customers. Secondly, front line associates can be educated as to the how, why and what to do when applying their knowledge and skills to their workplaces. Finally, front line associates can be socialised into their profession via formal and informal processes that mould and shape how they see themselves, and how their employers, customers and peers see them.

As this paper suggests, therefore, conducting training and education in how associates can use their skills to excite and please customers, and conducting training evaluation to find out how their training has produced benefits to an organisation, is essential.
APPENDIX 1

Items for an induction packet

- A project company organisation chart
- Map of the facility
- Key terms unique to the industry, company or job
- Copy of policy handbook
- Copy of enterprise contract or award
- Copy of specific job goals and descriptions
- List of company holidays
- List of fringe benefits
- Copies of performance appraisal forms, dates and procedures
- Copies of other required forms
- List of on the job training opportunities
- Source of information
- Detailed outline of emergency and accident prevention procedures
- Sample copy of each important company publication
- Telephone numbers and locations of key personnel and operations
- Copies of superannuation plans

APPENDIX 2

The following list of documents that management should send to newly hired persons:

- welcome letter;
- job description;
- instructions for the first day and week;
- instructions on when and where to arrive and who to ask for;
- instructions on parking arrangements;
- suggestions on proper attire;
- a list of what to expect for the first few days;
- a list or orientation to people, job, office, department and organization;
- what is to be expected regarding meals, breaks and time for personal business;
- initial job responsibilities; anda required or recommended reading list such as internal documents, etc.

In continuing the orientation/ socialization process, the same source offers the following suggestions to be implemented within six months of starting:

- assign a buddy or mentor to the new hire; one who is a peer but not a supervisor.
- have the buddy check in on a regular basis to answer any questions and be supportive of the new hire.
- have the new hire meet key people and visit key offices within the workplace.
- have the new person attend a company new staff orientation which provides an overview of company people, departments, policies and procedures as well as a tour of the firm's facilities.
- have a 90-day performance dialogue with a supervisor.

APPENDIX 3 Associates questionnaire

PART ONE:

These questions ask about you

1. In what hotel are you currently employed? Tick on box
   o1 Sheraton on the park
   o2 Four Points by Sheraton Sydney
   o3 The Westin Sydney
   o4 W Sydney

2. What is your current work department?
   o1 Concierge/Bell
   o2 Front office/Reception
   o3 Reservations
   o4 Communications
   o5 Engineering
   o6 Security
   o7 Housekeeping
   o8 Laundry
   o9 Kitchen
   o10 Stewarding
   o11 In Room Dining
   o12 Bar
   o13 Banquets
   o14 Restaurant
   o15 Other – please specify ____________________________

3. How long have you been working with STARWOOD? Write your answer in the space provided.
   __________ Months
   __________ Years

4. Are you?
   o1 Female
   o2 Male
5. What is the highest level of your qualifications?
   - 01 Year 10 or similar
   - 02 Year 12 or similar
   - 03 Certificate in hospitality management
   - 04 Diploma in hospitality management
   - 05 Undergraduate degree in hospitality management
   - 06 Postgraduate degree in hospitality management
   - 07 Other certificate
   - 08 Other diploma
   - 09 Other undergraduate degree
   - 10 Other postgraduate degree

6. How often do you work with hotel guests as a part of your current job? Tick one.
   - 01 Continuously – customer contact is all I do
   - 02 Very frequently – many times every shift
   - 03 Frequently – several times per shift
   - 04 Occasionally – a few times every shift
   - 05 Not very often – once or twice a shift at most
   - 06 Rarely – less than once per shift
   - 07 Never

PART TWO:

These questions ask about your reactions to Starwood Cares

Please tick (□) one box for each question.

1. **Course Objectives**

   The objectives of Starwood Cares are:
   1. to increase Guest Satisfaction Index ratings at our the hotel sector,
   2. to decrease number of guest complaints,
   3. to understand the links in Service Profit Chain,
   4. to learn the STAR Service Standards

   1. The course objectives listed above were achieved during the training course
      - 04 Strongly agree  □ 03 Agree  □ 02 Disagree  □ 01 Strongly disagree

   2. I clearly understood the course objectives listed above
      - 04 Strongly agree  □ 03 Agree  □ 02 Disagree  □ 01 Strongly disagree
II. Content of Starwood Cares

3. The content of the training course I attended had a practical application to my job
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

4. The content of the training course has been valuable for my career development
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

5. I found the content was interesting
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

6. The training content was well organised
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

III. The course usefulness and its relevance

7. The course was relevant to my current job
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

8. The course provided useful ideas that I can apply in my current job
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

9. The skills and knowledge in this course are relevant to my current job
   °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

IV. The trainer

Please assess the trainer in each of the following areas. Tick (4) one for each question.

My trainer was able to:

10. Teach the subject matter thoroughly
    °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

11. Encourage the interest of the trainees in the topic
    °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree

12. Explain Starwood Cares in detail
    °4 Strongly agree °3 Agree °2 Disagree °1 Strongly disagree
13. Help trainees with problems
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

14. Monitor trainee’s progress
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

15. Give practical examples to support the topic
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

PART THREE:
These questions ask how you have applied the skills trained in Starwood Cares to your work

As a result of attending Starwood Cares, I can now confidently:

16. Identify customers’ needs
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

17. Exceed customers’ expectations
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

18. Describe how to provide customer satisfaction
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

19. Explain the benefits of providing customer satisfaction
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

20. Handle customers’ complaints
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

21. Provide sense of welcome to customers
   - 4 Strongly agree   - 3 Agree   - 2 Disagree   - 1 Strongly disagree

22. I am able to apply the STAR service standards to my work situation
   - 1 Yes
   - 2 No (Go to 24)
23. Please describe briefly, how have you applied the STAR service standards to your job?

24. I cannot apply the STAR service standards to my work situation because: (You may tick more than one)

- I have no opportunities
- The job has changed since learning about the STAR service standards
- I do not receive support from my supervisor
- I do not receive support from my manager
- I do not want to change the way I do my job
- I do not remember what I learned from STAR
- I do not care
- I do not know
- Other-please specify ____________________________

PART FOUR:
These questions ask about the benefits of Starwood Cares to you

25. What effect does the STAR service standards have on your job? Tick as many boxes as you like, or tick "NONE".

- Increased motivation for job
- Increased enthusiasm for job
- Increased number of win-win solutions to customer' complaints
- Improved customer service
- Improved communication between departments
- Improved communication between managers
- Improved communication between associates
- Improved teamwork between departments
- Improved teamwork between managers
- Improved teamwork between associates
- Increased understanding of how associates impact Service Profit Chain
- NONE- there were no benefits to my job from the STAR service standards
- Other - please specify

***

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 4  Managers questionnaire

PART ONE:
These questions ask about you

1. In what hotel are you currently employed? Tick one box
   ○1 Sheraton on the park
   ○2 Four Points by Sheraton Sydney
   ○3 The Westin Sydney
   ○4 W Sydney

2. What department are you supervising?
   ○1 Concierge/Bell
   ○2 Front office/Reception
   ○3 Reservations
   ○4 Communications
   ○5 Engineering
   ○6 Security
   ○7 Housekeeping
   ○8 Laundry
   ○9 Kitchen
   ○10 Stewarding
   ○11 In room Dining
   ○12 Bars
   ○13 Banquets
   ○14 Restaurants
   ○15 Other – please specify ________________________________
PART TWO:

These questions ask for your appraisal of Starwood Cares

Please tick (4) one box for each question.

1. How would you rate the STAR service standards concept?
   - o1 Excellent
   - o2 Good
   - o3 Fair
   - o4 Poor
   - o5 Do not know

JOB KNOWLEDGE

As a result of the STARWOOD CARES TRAINING PROGRAM:

2. Associates have increased knowledge of the importance of the Service Profit Chain
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

3. Associates have increased knowledge of the STAR service standards
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

CUSTOMER RELATIONS

As a result of the STARWOOD CARES TRAINING PROGRAM:

4. Associates provide an improved standard of welcome (smile and greet customer)
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

5. Associates are better able to communicate properly to customers (talk and listen)
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

6. Associates are better able to meet customers’ needs (anticipate and answer)
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

7. Associates are better able to meet customers’ expectation (anticipate and answer)
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree

8. Associates are better able to solve customers’ problems (resolve)
   - o4 Strongly agree
   - o3 Agree
   - o2 Disagree
   - o1 Strongly disagree
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

As a result of the STARWOOD CARES TRAINING PROGRAM:

9. Associates speak more clearly to customers
   • 4 Strongly agree  • 3 Agree  • 2 Disagree  • 1 Strongly disagree

10. Associates speak more politely to customers
    • 4 Strongly agree  • 3 Agree  • 2 Disagree  • 1 Strongly disagree

11. Associates are better able to use correct body language when speak to customers
    • 4 Strongly agree  • 3 Agree  • 2 Disagree  • 1 Strongly disagree

12. Associates are better able to control tone of voice during communication with customers
    • 4 Strongly agree  • 3 Agree  • 2 Disagree  • 1 Strongly disagree

13. Associates make better eye contact when speak to customers
    • 4 Strongly agree  • 3 Agree  • 2 Disagree  • 1 Strongly disagree

14. Which of the following benefits, if any, have occurred as a result of the STARWOOD CARES SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM. Tick as many boxes as you like, or tick "NONE".

   • 1 Increased Guest Satisfaction Index in your department
   • 2 Increased positive customers’ feedback in your department
   • 3 Reduced number of complaints in your department
   • 4 Increased number of win-win solutions to customer’ complaints
   • 5 Improved customer service
   • 6 Improved communication between departments
   • 7 Improved communication between managers
   • 8 Improved communication between associates
   • 9 Improved teamwork between departments
   • 10 Improved teamwork between managers
   • 11 Improved teamwork between associates
   • 12 Increased understanding of how associates impact Service Profit Chain
   • 13 NONE – the Starwood Cares service training program has not provided any benefits
   • 14 Other – please specify  __________________________
15. What specific suggestions do you have for improving the STARWOOD CARES SERVICE
TRAINING PROGRAM?

1. Content
2. Duration
3. Presentation
4. Other—please specify _________________________________

***

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
APPENDIX 5

Starwood identifies the following measure of this transfer learning:

- Increased motivation and enthusiasm for the job;
- Increased Guest Satisfaction Index (GSI) scores in each department;
- Increased positive guests comments;
- Decreased number of guests complaints;
- Increased number of win-win solutions to guests complaints;
- Improved communication and teamwork between departments;
- Improved communication and teamwork between managers and associates

Source: Starwood – 2002
APPENDIX 6

The objectives of Stanwood Cares as provided to the researcher are:

- To introduce the Service Profit Chain;
- To understand the three links in the Service Profit Chain (that is associate satisfaction leads to guest satisfaction leads to profit and growth);
- To learn the STAR service standards (Smile and Greet, Talk and Listen, Anticipate and Answer, Resolve)
  - Smile and Greet: create a welcoming environment for guests through smiling, making eye contact, using the guest’s name and using appropriate hospitality greetings;
  - Talk and Listen: identify and practice the three ways of Stanwood communication (body language, tone of voice and words);
  - Anticipate and answer: discuss frequently asked questions from Stanwood guests to identify guests’ needs, understand the importance of offering options when providing answers;
  - Resolve: develop positive solutions to guests complaints

Source: Stanwood – 2002
APPENDIX 7

Date: Wed, 29 Aug 2001 11:34:56 +1000
From: Dr Robert-Leigh Compton <r.compton@uws.edu.au> [add to address book] [add to spam block list]
Subject: Published papers
To: awgpdba@mailcity.com

Andreas

Some good news for you I suspect. We have now adopted a policy that DBA papers must be of publishable standard but not necessarily published. This means that if you can finalise your research fairly quickly you will be well on your way to completion.

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Dear Colleague

CAUTHE 2002 Acceptance of Paper for Conference Proceedings

I am pleased to inform you that your paper, titled *Elements of Training Programs for front line employees* has been double-blind refereed and is now accepted in its final version for inclusion in the CAUTHE 2002 Conference Proceedings.

The CAUTHE Registration Brochure and Program has recently been published and is on its way to you. Details of your presentation day, date and time are included in the booklet. Please note that the CAUTHE conference committee has made a firm decision that ALL presenters must register and pay for the conference by the Earlybird date of 7 December 2001 to be included in the final program and the conference proceedings. Registration forms are currently being distributed, or can be downloaded from the conference website http://www.promaco.com.au/conference/2002/cauthe/cauthe.htm

You will be allocated 15 minutes presentation time and 5 minutes for questions. Powerpoint presentations on CD-ROM are recommended, with a maximum of 15 to 20 slides and no more that 40 words per slide. If you have any specific presentation requirements, please notify PROMACO at least two weeks prior to the conference.

If you have not already done so, please sign the Copyright Agreement form attached to this e-mail and return by Fax (+61 8 9332 2911) to PROMACO. Many thanks for your support of CAUTHE 2002, I look forward to seeing you in Fremantle.

Yours sincerely,

A / Professor Dr Ross Dowling
Conference Convenor
5840

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Elements of Training Programs for front line employees

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Abstract

Many hotel operations now emphasise training activities for front line staff as a means of providing an outstanding service for their customers. Most progressive and realistic hotel operators today realise that while technology plays a growing role in the hospitality industry, the service provided by front line employees inevitably determines their long-term success (Hogan, 2001). Melia (1992) said that training for front line employees is crucial in the hospitality industry simply because training for them involves rendering a friendly service and keeping hotels competitive and profitable. However, little research has been done on training in the hospitality industry for front line employees while most of the training that does occur is for managers (Herman and Eller, 1991). This article highlights some considerations for hospitality training programs for front line employees and discusses the importance of evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of such training programs.

Introduction

Nowadays, the hospitality industry appears to be facing increasing competitive pressures to improve the quality of its delivery of products and services. One mechanism for improving quality is through improvements in the technical skills of the employees delivering the products and services (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990). To develop these technical skills, organisations have moved away from unstructured, on-the-job training systems to more formal, structured training programs (Rosow and Zager, 1988 cited in Ford, Quinones, Sego, and Sorra, 1992). For many hotels, success depends largely on the availability of qualified employees who are able to translate and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service. Unqualified employees’ failure to deliver consistently high quality service could put a hotel’s reputation and long-term competitiveness at risk. Hotel companies, thus, must take training programs for front line
employees seriously to accommodate the growing pressure of providing qualified employees. However, most hotels appear to be using a traditional approach to training which consists of the assessment of training needs, the use of training methods to deliver content based on needs, and finally a comprehensive evaluation of the program using several different evaluation criteria and strategies (Tracey and Tews, 1995).

The purpose of this article is to describe what contextual and training delivery elements need to be considered for training programs to best achieve their objectives.

Theory of training

Some new employees come capable of most of the knowledge and skills required to start work. Others may have need of extensive training before they are ready to make a contribution to the organisation. While training might be accomplished on an informal basis, better results are usually achieved through a well-organised, formal training program or on the job development-training program (Nankervis, Compton, McCarthy, 1999). According to the various literatures, training means different things to different people. It might simply mean reading a manual or it might mean learning new skills for a specific job or it might mean someone is assigned to accomplish a particular task by learning from others. Training, then, can be defined as any method used by an organisation to enhance learning by its individual members (Nankervis et al, 1999). The main objective of training at the beginning of an individual’s employment is to foster to a satisfactory level the knowledge and skills needed to achieve effective performance. As an individual continues on the job, training then provides opportunities to obtain new knowledge and skills. As a result of the training, the individual may then be more effective on the job and may qualify for jobs at a higher level.
The concept of a traditional approach to training - the assessment of training needs, the use of training methods to deliver content based on needs, and evaluation - has now been refined particularly in the area of assessment of training needs. For example, Nankervis et al (1999) state that in order to approach training needs more systematically, three different analyses are required. These are firstly, organisational analysis: this examine the goals, resources and environment of the organisation to determine where training emphasis should be placed; secondly, task analysis: this involves determining what the content of the training program should be based upon a study of the tasks or duties involved on the job; and lastly person analysis: this identifies the gaps between the trainees' abilities and their required levels of performance.
After these three analyses have been completed, managers need to establish the desired outcomes of training programs, which should be stated formally in instructional objectives. Once the needs for training have been determined and the instructional objectives have been specified, the next step is to develop the type of environment for achieving these objectives that includes formulating a specific training strategy and preparing instructional plans.

After the training program is completed, evaluation is undertaken to determine its effectiveness. An evaluation should be undertaken in order to provide data for a specific decision such as whether or not a course should be improved, continued or terminated.

**Need to evaluate training program**

According to Tannenbaum and Woods (1992) training activities are pervasive, expensive and strategically important. To maximize the payoffs from this investment, the hospitality industry must effectively plan, implement, and evaluate its training.

Evaluation of training material serves many goals that can provide useful information on how the program can be improved, help pinpoint particular difficulties in the organisation and implementation of the event, identify which training methods are most effective, assess the relevance of the program for the participants through improved knowledge and skills (Roberts, 1990; Carroll and Rosson, 1995; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Nankervis et al, 1999; Cooke, 2000).

In training evaluation theory, there are four levels of increasingly rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of a training event (Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Plant and Ryan, 1992; Faerman and Ban, 1993; Holton, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Warr, Allan, and Birdi,
Kirkpatrick (1998) and Hubbard (2001) describe the four levels as follows:

- Level 1: Reaction; what the trainees say about the value of the training,
- Level 2: Learning; whether the trainees demonstrably met the course objectives by acquiring some skills and knowledge;
- Level 3: Behaviour; whether the skill acquired in training is implemented in the workplace;
- Level 4: Results; this final level is concerned with the effect of the training intervention on the bottom line of the company, such as increase profit, customer satisfaction, etc.

Training evaluation should involve applying all four of Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels and be focused on whether the learning is transferred by the trainee who, as a result, becomes more efficient or effective in their work performance and, in consequence, improves the performance of the organisation as a whole (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Robotham (1999) explains that the amount of learning that trainees transfer from the training room to the workplace depends, mainly, on two aspects of the workplace conditions:

1. The degree of similarity between what occurs in the workplace and what was learned in the training program (and this includes how it was presented),

2. How easily the trainees can integrate into the work environment the skills or knowledge gained in the training program

The importance of these two aspects stress the need to refer continually to the workplace when looking for ideas on how to present information or skills and when designing activities and evaluating the training program.
Definition of contextual training elements

Nelson and Neufeldt (1998) proposed the idea of contextual teaching and learning because they found that many teaching methods are not sufficient to address the needs of diverse learners in a multicultural society. Contextual teaching and learning has many definitions, each of which is based on a different perspective, for example, Cunningham (1995) states that contextual teaching and learning is a process that varies across work situations and is not static. By definition, Granello (2000) defines contextual teaching and learning as an important pedagogical tool that can be applied in an educational environment and which provides a theoretical rationale for many teaching and learning interventions. By contrast, in a contextual approach of training, learning is attached to the context in which the knowledge is constructed and knowledge is seen as inseparable from the context and activities within which it develops (Mayer, 1998 cited in Granello, 2000). In this view, the most important aspects of any contextual training elements are that the physical (environmental) and social context within which the learning occurs is an integral part of the learning activity (Resnick, 1991 cited in Granello, 2000).

In the hospitality industry, according to Smith and Cooper (2000) it is now time to shift from concern with the elements of the training programs, that is, needs assessment, training methods, and evaluation, to a concern for the delivery of the training, particularly on relating the training to the program objectives, and closely matching training situations to work situations. They emphasise the interactive relationships between these aspects of training programs. From the definition of contextual training elements as stated by Granello (2000), it can be said that matching training situations to work situations is considered a physical element, the delivery of the training is considered as the social context within which the learning occurs and program objectives as an integral part of the learning activity.
Training programs for front line employees

The need for employee training is acknowledged almost universally (Knight and Salter, 1985; Mesa, 1999; Sullivan, 2000; Westbrook, 2001; Walsh, 2001). Training employees at all levels of the industry - with special attention to hourly employees - can help enable the hospitality industry to recruit and retain employees, to keep well-run operations afloat and to realise its economic potential even in hard times (Herman and Eller, 1991). Hoffman (2001), the president of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Trainers said that effective training provides a competitive advantage for the organisation. Berta (2001) defines effective training as relating to organisations' long-term goals, which include maintaining the organisations’ quality of service and providing career development for employees. Hogan (2001) states that most hoteliers today realise that while technology plays a growing role in the hospitality industry, the people or personals side of the business inevitably determines the long-term success. It appears that training for front line employees remains essential to conveying service quality and so to surviving in today's environment.

Contextual Elements Prior to conducting training programs

Some contextual elements need to be considered prior to conducting training programs for front line employees. These are employment practices which are not commonly considered to be a part of a full training program, but which can be argued to fulfil some training functions.

Induction

Nankervis et al. (1999, p. 305) define induction “as the formal process of familiarising new employees to the organisation, their job, and the work unit”.
Induction provides new employees with an understanding of how job performance contributes to the success of the organisation and how the services or products of the organisation can contribute to society. In addition, induction-training programs explain to new staff what the subsequent training programs will be about (Hogan, 2001). Furthermore, induction sessions should be supplemented with a packet of materials that new employees are able to read at their leisure (Nankervis et al, 1999). Some materials that a packet might include are shown in appendix 1.

Service/ products

A full service hotel can have many departments and dozens of services. Information to new employees about the many departments and services can involve an explanation of the company’s philosophy (Hogan, 2001).

General procedures

Procedures manuals must give precise explanations and it must be ensured that the front line employees can fully comprehend them (Hogan, 2001).

Cooperative endeavour

As suggested by Nankervis et al (1999) this describes organisational directions, which can be explained through combinations of conditions of employment, pay and benefits. Hogan (2001) adds some other essential elements such as dress code, the chain of communication, policies, job safety, recognition programs and security procedures, which can also illuminate organisational directions.
All of the above can help explain important aspects of an organisation to employees. An understanding of an organisation's philosophy, directions and procedural standards may improve the effectiveness of the training program by clarifying the context, which the training program is designed to support.

Training programs

Nankervis et al (1999, p. 308) defines training 'as any procedure initiated by an organisation to foster learning among organisational members'. The purpose of a training program is then to achieve the overall organisational objectives (Nankervis et al, 1999) and at the same time an effective training program should contribute to the satisfaction of the trainees' personal goals (Cooke, 2000) and organisational bottom lines (Holton III, 1996). The following are some elements that need to be included in the development and implementation of training programs:

One: Goals

Knight and Salter (1985) suggest that the first step of any training program should be to explain its goals to the participants. The reason for this is that goals provide direction and motivation. In addition, Knight and Salter also emphasise the importance of using precise words which are easy to comprehend and also measurable when explaining the goals.

Two: Skills and knowledge

The primary intention of training programs is to foster to a satisfactory level, acquisition of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective performance. As the individual continues on the job, training then provides opportunities to acquire more knowledge and skills (Nankervis et al, 1999), which can further improve job
performance. The skills and knowledge to be developed must be immediately relevant and applicable to the workplace (Smith and Cooper, 2000).

**Three: Learning experiences**

The achievement of a job-training program relies on more than the recognition of training needs and the preparation of the program. Nankervis *et al* (1999) state that in order to maximise the learning of the front line employees, careful consideration needs to be given to the relevant principles of learning to be incorporated into the training. Holton III (1996) states that there are 4 primary relevant principles that influence learning experiences: trainee reactions, motivation to learn, ability, and job attitudes.

![Figure 2: Model of learning](image)


**Trainee reactions:** positive trainees' reactions are needed to build the interest and attention necessary for effective learning (Patrick, 1992). Holton III (1996) points out that more positive reactions to training may aid learning,
and that trainees who are more successful during learning are expected to have more positive reactions to the learning experience.

**Motivation to learn:** Holton III (1996) says that motivation to learn has a direct relationship with learning. Nankervis *et al* (1999) also state that a precondition for learning is that the trainee be properly motivated. That is, for optimum learning, the trainee must recognise their need to acquire new information or to learn new skills and this desire to learn must be maintained as training progresses. While trainees at work are being motivated by certain common needs, they differ from one another in their perceptions of the relative importance of these needs at any given time. Hicks and Klimoski (1987); Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1991); Vroom, 1964 cited in Holton III, (1996) state that meeting trainees' needs will enhance their motivation to learn.

**Ability:** Tracey and Tews (1995) say that an individual's ability to learn and acquire new knowledge and skills can have a direct influence on their training preparation and performance. Many training programs require participants to absorb and synthesise learning materials. Nankervis *et al* (1999) highlight the importance of finding out trainees' previous work and learning experiences in order to assess their current learning skills. This knowledge can be used in designing the training program activities so that existing skills and knowledge can be used to help trainees master or develop new skills and knowledge. If trainees possess critical-reasoning, problem solving, and decision-making abilities, learning is likely to be a relatively quick and efficient (Tracey and Tews, 1995).
Attitudes; an individual's attitude can influence their motivation to learn (Holton III, 1996) and can also affect his/her preparation for and application of training (Tracey and Tews, 1995). This suggests that trainees who have positive attitudes would be expected to be more motivated to learn and more willing to apply newly acquired knowledge and skills on the job than those with less positive attitudes. This may affect their performance both in the training program and on the job (Tracey and Tews, 1995., Holton III, 1996).

Four: Transfer of training

Transferring training to the workplace is the most important part of any training program. Some researchers have identified certain factors that might improve transfer of training on to the job. These include the transfer condition (Peters, O’Conner, and Eulberg, 1985), the transfer climate condition (Tracy, 1992 cited in Rouillier and Goldstein, 1993), the importance of transfer design such as goal setting during and after training (Wexley and Baldwin, 1986), and finally the opportunity to perform trained tasks on the job (Ford et al, 1992; Tracey and Tews, 1995). According to Nankervis et al (1999) effective transfer of training is seen as the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of learning. Furthermore, once training programs have been completed, the supervisor must ensure that the work environment supports the transfer of learning (Robinson and Robinson, 1985), and rewards the trainees for applying the new skills and knowledge (Knight and Salter,1985; and Nankervis et al, 1999).

Five: Evaluation
In the context of training evaluation, the goal of an evaluation, therefore, is best defined in terms of the provision of data for a specific decision, for example, whether a course should be continued or modified (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Nankervis et al, 1999. Carroll and Rosson (1995) introduced two types of evaluation. First is formative evaluation, which seeks to identify aspects of a design that can be improved. Second is summative evaluation, which seeks to gauge the effectiveness of the design of the training context.

Training program efforts must be systematically evaluated to determine whether the desired outcomes have been achieved (Tracey and Tews, 1995). These evaluations can be used to determine the effectiveness of a training program (Knight and Salter, 1985; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Nankervis et al, 1999) and should be carried out periodically (Tracey and Tews, 1995; Cooke, 2000). Evaluation can only be done when specific and measurable goals have been selected (Holton III, 1996). Roberts (1990) states that evaluation of the effectiveness of training programs can be carried out in a number of different ways depending upon the kind of training event, the objectives of the training, and the type of participants. Some practitioners have adopted Kirkpatrick's (1998) four levels (level one is
reaction, level two is learning, level three is behaviour, and level four is organisational results) as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation (Alliger and Janak, 1989). Level one is that of immediate reaction, which seeks to determine what the front line employees thought of the program, whether they found it useful, and if it would help their career development. Level two is learning, which deals with what the front line employees actually learned during the training session. Level three is behaviour or transfer of learning, which highlights the application of learning in the workplace. Level four is results, which focuses on the impact the behaviours have on performance.

However, few hospitality organisations have made full use of this tool (Tracey and Tews, 1995) and Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined several possible reasons for this failure to apply the four levels:

- Managers do not consider evaluation to be important,
- Managers do not know how to evaluate training beyond the first level,
- There is no pressure from higher management to do more.

Nobles (1998) discusses some criteria for the development of strategies to better evaluate training in the hospitality industry. The criteria he nominates are consistency, being focused, and objectivity. Consistency requires that measurements follow certain guidelines. Any change in the standard being measured requires a corresponding change in the measurement tool. Being focused refers to the need for an effective measurement system to relate to specific standards to which employees have been trained. Employees then must be trained to perform tasks exactly to the stated standard and all tools must evaluate the standard exactly as it was trained and exactly as it is performed.
Objectivity requires that all standards must be clear, observable, and measurable. In addition, Nobles (1998) gave an example of clear, observable and measurable criteria as follows:

**Standard**: "Telephone is answered by 3rd ring; the answer greets the caller, identifies location, states his or her name, and offers help".

**Example**: "Good morning, house keeping department, this is Jane, how may I help you?"

From the example, it can be seen that the employees' performance either does or does not meet the standard outlined.

**Summary**

To achieve a competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded market requires a qualified workforce, which can provide an excellent service. To succeed in achieving a standard of satisfactory service, the hotel industry needs to consider training as a priority. Training for front line employees can be seen as imperative because front line employees deal directly with customers who demand courtesy and consistently excellent service. Some contextual features appear to be important to consider prior to conducting training programs to ensure that training participants are familiar with their work environment. This can help improve the effectiveness of training programs. Evaluating training programs in the hospitality industry should be carried out continually to determine their effectiveness. In addition, evaluation can provide useful information on how the program can be improved or modified. Although evaluation is not always an easy exercise to conduct and may not produce findings that are as precise as might be desired, the assessment results should be of value to improving the programs offered and thus to the organisation’s overall objective, which is improved performance.
Appendix 1

Items for an induction packet

- A current company organisation chart
- A project company organisation chart
- Map of the facility
- Key terms unique to the industry, company or job
- Copy of policy handbook
- Copy of enterprise contract or award
- Copy of specific job goals and descriptions
- List of company holidays
- List of fringe benefits
- Copies of performance appraisal forms, dates and procedures
- Copies of other required forms
- List of on-the-job training opportunities
- Source of information
- Detailed outline of emergency and accident prevention procedures
- Sample copy of each important company publication
- Telephone numbers and locations of key personnel and operations
- Copies of superannuation plans

Taken from Nankervis, Compton, McCarthy (1999, p. 307)
References


Date: Fri, 7 Dec 2001 09:07:43 +0800

From: "Promaco Conventions PTY Ltd"<promaco@promaco.com.au>

Subject: CAUTHE 2002

To: <Awgdba@lycos.com>

Reply To: <promaco@promaco.com.au>

Andreas Wahyu Gunawan Putra
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Dear Colleague

CAUTHE 2002 Acceptance of Paper for Conference Proceedings

I am pleased to inform you that your paper, titled Factors that assist trainees to transfer learning to the job: A Meta analysis, has been double-blind refereed and is now accepted in its final version for inclusion in the CAUTHE 2002 Conference Proceedings.

The CAUTHE Registration Brochure and Program has recently been published and is on its way to you. Details of your presentation day, date and time are included in the booklet. Please note that the CAUTHE conference committee has made a firm decision that ALL presenters must register and pay for the conference by the Earlybird date of 7 December 2001 to be included in the final program and the conference proceedings. Registration forms are currently being distributed, or can be downloaded from the conference website http://www.promaco.com.au/conference/2002/cauthae/cauthae.htm

You will be allocated 15 minutes presentation time and 5 minutes for questions. Powerpoint presentations on CD-ROM are recommended, with a maximum of 15 to 20 slides and no more that 40 words per slide. If you have any specific presentation requirements, please notify PROMACO at least two weeks prior to the conference. If you have not already done so, please sign the Copyright Agreement form attached to this e-mail and return by Fax (+61 8 9332 2911) to PROMACO. Many thanks for your support of CAUTHE 2002, I look forward to seeing you in Fremantle.

Yours sincerely,

A / Professor Dr Ross Dowling
Conference Convenor
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December 2001

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Factors that assist trainees to transfer learning to the job: A Meta analysis

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Abstract:

One key area of importance when evaluating training programs is to determine the effectiveness of a training program by ensuring trainees transfer learning to the workplace (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Holton III, Bates, Seyler and Carvalho (1997) define transfer of learning as the degree to which trainees apply to their jobs the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes they gained in training. One of the focal points of the evaluation of transfer of learning is the investigation of the factors, which influence how transfer takes place. As a meta-analysis this paper explores what types of factors affect transfer of learning to the job. For future study, this paper suggests that transfer climate needs to be investigated further to find out how it can help trainees transferring learning to the workplace. A research agenda is proposed.

Keywords: transfer climate

Introduction

Evaluating the effectiveness of training programs is essential for managers who need to ensure that trainees apply the learning gained from training to their work situations (Kirkpatrick, 1998). This has been an imperative for a considerable time (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980). Training effectiveness can in part be determined by examining the transfer of learning to the work environment (Noe, 1986; Holton III et al, 1997; and Kirkpatrick, 1998). Since Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels (level one: reaction, level two: learning, level 3: behaviour, and level 4: results) were first introduced in 1959, evaluations of transfers of learning have included examining the characteristics of training programs and individual trainees, and then relating these factors to training performance and job performance (Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993). Kirkpatrick (1998) has found that many managers have only evaluated training programs at the first level - which is
reaction, by using smile sheets - because it is quick and simple. However, this is inadequate (Holton III, 1996). Instead, job performance also needs to be considered and this is related to training program outcomes through transfer of learning. Training evaluation should involve applying all four of Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels and focus on whether the learning is transferred by the trainee who, as a result, becomes more efficient or effective in their work performance and, in consequence, improves the performance of the organisation as a whole (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980 and Kirkpatrick, 1998)

This paper focuses on the second of Kirkpatrick’s levels of evaluation, that is, specifically the transfer of learning. As an introductory literature review this paper attempts to explore what types of factors affect transfer of learning to the job.

**Definition of transfer of learning**

A critical issue with any training program is the successful transfer of the trained tasks into the job (Ford, Quinones, Sego, and Sorra, 1992, and Kirkpatrick, 1998). The study of transfer of learning is important to all these organisations, which are concerned not only with increasing productivity and improving performance, but also with the way people interact, that is how they relate to one another (Mbawo, 1995). In the context of an organisation’s training program, the word ‘transfer’ refers to a trainee’s application to the job of what is learned (Burke, 1997). Transfer of learning, in this context, can be defined as the degree to which trainees apply to their jobs the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes they obtained in training (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Holton III et al, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Burke and Baldwin, 1999).
Factors affecting transfer of learning

The criterion of successful training is if trainees have learned and applied newly acquired skills and knowledge to the workplace (Holton III et al., 1997) that can affect the results (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

The figure below visually summarises the factors affecting the transfer of learning to the workplace. These factors can be divided into four main groupings. Those which relate to the working environment; those which relate to the opportunity to perform; the trainees' characteristics; and aspects of the training program.

Figure 1: the factors affect the transfer of learning to the workplace
Opportunity to perform

Baldwin and Ford (1988 cited in Holton III et al, 1997) have highlighted a number of factors that might impact on learning transfer and one of these is the extent to which the trainee is given the opportunity on the job to perform the tasks taught in training sessions on the job (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Goldstein, 1986; Wexley and Latham, 1991 cited in Holton III, et al, 1997). Opportunities to perform depend in part upon:

- the work experiences of trainees after the training, and the tasks set by the supervisor (Holton III et al, 1997),
- the effort of trainees to obtain work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained (Ford et al, 1992).

Trainee characteristics

According to Ford et al (1992) and Huczynski and Lewis (1980), trainees’ characteristics such as trainees’ ability and trainees’ motivation can affect transfer of learning. Stiefel (1974 cited in Huczynski and Lewis, 1980 and Baldwin and Ford, 1988) states that effective transfer of learning requires both the ability to apply what has been learned and the opportunity to use it in the organisational situation. Thus it is necessary to look both at the trainees and at the features of the organisational context within which the new learning will be applied. In addition, Huczynski and Lewis (1980); Noe (1986); Baldwin and Ford (1988); Holton III (1996); and Ford (1997) suggest that the amount of learning a trainee will transfer also depends in part upon personal characteristics (each trainee’s ability to comprehend the new subject matter and his level of skill in being able to exercise his/her new learning) and the motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer is determined to a large extent by the degree to which a participant values the course attended and the learning gained (Holton III, 1996 and Ford, 1997).
**Work environment**

It is also important for trainers to know the type of work environment which can encourage (e.g. rewards, job aids), discourage (e.g., ridicule from peers), or actually prohibit the application of new skills and knowledge on the job (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980; Ford *et al.*, 1992; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992 cited in Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh, 1995). Kirkpatrick (1998) suggests that one way to create a climate which cultivates the transfer of skills is to involve managers in the development of the program to ensure that a program teaches practical concepts, principles, and techniques that are relevant to the job. This kind of work environment is sometimes referred to as transfer of climate. It can be said that the work environment can affect the transfer of learning to the job through this climate (Holton *et al.*, 1997 and Kirkpatrick, 1998). Kirkpatrick (1998) supports this by stating that trainees who work in conditions supportive of transfer learning appear to transfer their newly acquired skills and knowledge into individual performance changes on the job. A study conducted by Baron (1999) found that hospitality students who had completed industrial placement were eager to transfer learning to the job within the industry where they had found their workmates at both management and operative level to be friendly, motivated, approachable and easy to get on with. Indeed, students felt that the atmosphere as positive and had helped them to enjoy their work. Thus, it appears that a supportive work environment can have a positive impact on the transfer of learning to the workplace.

The transfer climate of a workplace may either support or inhibit the provision of learning on the job (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, and Salas, 1992 and Kirkpatrick, 1998). Several studies have established that transfer climate can significantly affect an individual’s ability and motivation to transfer learning to the job (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980; Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993; Tracey, Tannenbaum, and Kavanagh, 1995). Baron
(1999) found that the first time hospitality students thought of working life in the hospitality industry they were generally positive and felt it was glamorous, exciting and offered many opportunities and career development. However, once employed in the industry, there some students were disappointed in the lack of training available. Their overall impressions of the training were poor and they realised that working the industry was not particularly glamorous. If the working environment does not assist trainees to apply skills and knowledge and fewer opportunities to apply them are given, then is it unlikely that trainees will apply learning to the workplace.

However, although many scholars support the importance of the transfer of training climate, with some stating that it may even be as important as the training itself, there is no clear understanding of what constitutes such a climate (Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992 and Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993).

Generally, the construct ‘climate’ is defined as a psychologically meaningful description of the work environment (James and Jones, 1976; Jones and James, 1979 cited in Holton III et al, 1997). Transfer climate can be described as a ‘sense of imperative’ (Schneider and Rentsch, 1988 cited in Holton III et al, 1997) that arises from a person’s perceptions of his or her work environment -such as supervisor support, opportunity to use skills and knowledge learnt in training, transfer design, peer support, supervisor sanction, and resistance-, and that influences the extent to which that person can use learned skills on the job (Holton III et al, 1997).

Kirkpatrick (1998) describes transfer climate in relation to training participants’ immediate supervisors who can be preventing (the manager forbids the participants from doing what they have been taught to do in the training program), discouraging (the
manager does not want the trainee to apply new skills), neutral (the manager is not concerned about transferring new skills), encouraging (the manager encourages the trainee to apply their learning on the job), and requiring (the manager wants to ensure that the learning transfers to the job).

Analysis of transfer climate is particularly essential in change-oriented interventions that seek to create a climate of continuous learning (Bennett, Lehman, and Forst, 1999). Under a continuous learning philosophy, learning is considered an everyday activity for all employees with training as a key mechanism for improving skills (Noe and Ford, 1992). To achieve continuous learning practice, trainees should be given work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained (Ford et al, 1992). Research by Baron (1999) found that hospitality students who perceived training programs as inadequate, had shown a lack of motivation to continue learning within the industry. Also, Baron discovered that hospitality students ranked the quality and quantity of the training they received while on industry placements as poor and as unavailable respectively. This negatively influenced the students’ desire to work in the industry. This suggests that within the hospitality industry, training is not highly regarded as a tool for continuous learning, even tough it influences the recruitment and career progression of employees. Furthermore, Baron found that hospitality students who perceived training as important admitted that working in the hospitality industry provided high levels of satisfaction and had good career opportunities. It can said that if trainees were given adequate training and work opportunities, it is likely they will transfer learning to the job.

In addition to the previous factor that can assist trainees apply the learning they have acquired onto the job, the following workplace factors also need to be considered. Robotham (1999) explains that the amount of learning that trainees transfer from the
training room to the workplace depends, mainly, on two aspects of the workplace conditions:

- The degree of similarity between what occurs in the workplace and what was learned in the training program (and this includes how it was presented),
- How easily the trainees can integrate into the work environment the skills or knowledge gained in the training program

The importance of these two aspects stress the need to refer continually to the workplace when looking for ideas on how to present information or skills and when designing activities and tests for the training session.

**Training program**

In addition, Mbawo (1995) also outlines some variables of the training program which assist trainees apply learning to the job. These are:

- Adult learning principles, which indicate the importance of the experience of the participant, foster critical reflective thinking and empower the participant (Lawer, 1999). Robotham (1999) states that adults are best motivated to learn when that which is to be learned relates to or is meaningful to their needs, goals, habits, values, and self-concept. The adult’s willingness to participate in learning depends upon such factors as: perception of the value of learning, acceptance of what and how to learn, need for self esteem or social affiliation with others, and expectations of life.
- According to (Kolb and Fry, 1975 cited in Mbawo, 1995; and Robotham, 1999) experiential learning is based on three assumptions:
  - people learn best when they are personally involved in the learning experience.
◊ Knowledge has to be discovered if it is to mean anything or make a difference in behaviour,

◊ and commitment to learning is highest when people are free to act on their own learning goals and actively pursue them within a given framework.

- Goal assessment is used to assess whether the goals that were set at the beginning were actually met (Robotham 1999)

- Creation of an action plan. Garavaglia (1993) proposes this idea, which encourages trainees to make ‘contracts’ with themselves to implement the skills learned in training, thus increasing the likelihood that transfer will occur.

- Consequences and feedback or rewards and incentives should encourage trainees to apply on the job the behaviours they have learned in training (Garavaglia, 1993., Holton III, 1996., Kirkpatrick, 1998, and Cooke, 2000)

- A continuous learning environment is one in which knowledge and skill acquisition is supported by social interaction and work relationships (Dubin, 1990 cited in Tracey et al, 1995). By working together in a highly interactive work context, organisational members gain an understanding of each other’s tasks and responsibilities and clearly recognize the interrelationships among jobs (Tracey et al, 1995).

Summary

This meta-analysis highlights some important components of ensuring transfer of learning to the workplace. Transfer of learning appears more likely to occur when identical elements exist in both the training program and the work situation. In other words, the training’s content and activities should reflect the real world. In addition, the trainee should be given the opportunity to perform the tasks on the job. The paper also supports the view that a positive transfer climate appears to be very important if transfer of learning is to occur. Positive transfer climate can be
influenced by supervisor support, opportunity to perform, and peer support. As argued above, transfer climate is one of several significant factors that help determine the outcomes of any training program. Analysis of the transfer climate is then particularly important in change-oriented interventions that look for to create a climate of continuous learning culture. Trainees will transfer learning to the job if trainees are given opportunities to perform, a supportive environment and provided with training programs which meet their expectations. In addition, the transfer of learning can also be influenced by firstly, the similar between what was learned in the training session and what occurs in the workplace, and secondly how trainees can become familiar with the workplace so they can apply the skills and knowledge.

Research agenda

Given the discussion above, future research should continue to examine the role of the transfer climate in effective transfer of learning into the workplace without neglecting the importance of trainees’ characteristics, training design, and training principles. Future work should investigate empirically how the transfer climate influences trainee perceptions and behaviour. For example, do culture and climate affect individual behaviour by influencing self-efficacy (Gist, 1987), motivation (Noe, 1986), or expectations about formal and informal training experiences (Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers, 1991)?

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References


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Evaluating training programs for front line employees: Implementing Kirkpatrick's model in the hospitality industry

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Evaluating training programs for front line employees: Implementing Kirkpatrick’s model in the hospitality industry

Abstract

These days, the hospitality industry appears to be facing increasingly competitive pressures to enrich the quality of its delivery of products and services. One method for improving quality is through training programs, which focus on the technical skills of the front line employees delivering the products and services (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990). For many hotels, success depends mainly on the availability of qualified front line employees who are able to provide and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service. Thus, many hotels now highlight training activities for front line employees as a means of providing an outstanding service for their customers. Nonetheless, little research has been done on evaluating training in the hospitality industry for front line employees. Consequently the financial effectiveness of training programs is difficult to establish. The lack of research underpinning training evaluation procedures is a weak point in the area of Human Resource Development (Holton Ill, 1996).

Since Kirkpatrick’s model was first published in 1959 the further development of approaches to the evaluation of training has had an ongoing attractiveness. The 4-evaluation levels used by Kirkpatrick (level 1: reaction, level 2: learning, level 3: behaviour, and level 4: results) are now being both challenged by some and further refined by others (Holton III, 1998). In the hospitality industry, many managers appear only to evaluate training programs for front line employees at the first level - which is reaction, by using smile sheets - because it is quick and simple. However, this is inadequate. Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined several possible reasons for this failure to implement the four levels: 1) managers do not consider evaluation to be important, 2) managers do not know how to evaluate training beyond the first level, and 3) there is no pressure from higher management to do more. Instead, training evaluation should involve applying all 4 of Kirkpatrick’s evaluation levels and be focused on whether the learning is transferred by the trainee who, as a result, becomes more efficient or effective in their work performance and, in consequence, improves the performance of the organisation as a whole. Therefore, research needs to be carried out to evaluate training programs in the hospitality industry for front line employees. This paper discusses Kirkpatrick’s model and some issues surrounding its use. The model is used to evaluate training programs for front line employees in some leading Hotels in Sydney. A research agenda is proposed.
Introduction

There are about as many thoughts on how to gauge training effectiveness, as there are trainers. For years, training practitioners have often relied on Donald Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model (1959 – 1998), also known as the four-level evaluation model. Many training specialists acknowledge it as a workable and popular approach to training evaluation (Alliger and Janak, 1989). However, according to Alliger and Janak (1989) and Holton III (1996), the four level system of training evaluation is really a taxonomy of outcomes and is flawed as an evaluation model. Indeed, Holton III (1996) has said that such a model needs to identify areas of outcomes, account for the effects of intervening variables that affect outcomes, and indicate causal relationships. Even though the four-level evaluation model is being both challenged and refined, the model has received distressingly little research and is rarely fully implemented in organizations (Kimmerling, 1993). Holton III (1996) supported Kimmerling’s (1993) view by saying that the lack of research into developing a model and a theory of evaluation is a glaring shortcoming for human resource development.

This paper discusses firstly, training evaluation theory, secondly understandings of Kirkpatrick’s model and its problems, and finally issues surrounding its use. The objective of this article is to explicate where Kirkpatrick’s model can be further developed to better evaluate training activities.

Training evaluation

Training professionals tend to rely on the model proposed by Kirkpatrick which describes four-stages of evaluation - reaction, learning, behavior, and results (Faerman and Ban, 1993). Some practitioners acknowledge Kirkpatrick’s model for training evaluation as the standard in the field (Holton III, 1996., Abernathy, 1999). From 1959 until his latest book, published in 1998, Kirkpatrick defines reaction (how participants in the program react to
the program), learning (the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or skills as a result of attending the program), behavior (the extent to which change in behavior has occurred because the participant attended the training program), and results (the final results that occurred because the participants attended the program). However, many changes to this model have been proposed. Hamblin (1974), for example, added a fifth level (economic benefits) to reflect training’s ultimate value in terms of an organization’s criteria for success. Also Kaufman and Keller (1994) noted the internal and external consequences of all interventions associated with performance and organizational improvement. Phillips (1995, cited in Holton III, 1996) and Parry (1996) indicated that the importance of financial benefits needed to be included. Brinkerhoff (1988) has developed an alternative model to Kirkpatrick’s. Brinkerhoff (1988) has proposed a six-stage evaluation model - consisting of goal setting, program design, program implementation, immediate outcome, usage outcome and impacts -, in essence, added two formative evaluation stages as precursors to Kirkpatrick’s four levels.

However, all these models have received incomplete implementation, little empirical testing (Holton III, 1996) and appear very complex (Dionne, 1996). Tannenbaum and Yulk (1992 cited in Dionne, 1996) have also identified weaknesses such as the lack of a unifying theory, and Wexley and Baldwin (1986), Noe and Ford (1992 cited in Dionne, 1996), and Holton III (1996) have queried the validity of existing research findings. Managers, who implement Kirkpatrick’s model, tend to use only the first level (Kirkpatrick, 1998). According to Kirkpatrick (1998) the level of evaluation called reaction is very simple to implement and produces a quick result that is beneficial to trainers and managers in ensuring that training programs run well. Holton III (1996) and Cooke (2000) support this view. Unfortunately trainers and managers have not yet gone beyond
this level for many reasons. Kirkpatrick (1998) has outlined several possible reasons for this failure to further systematically develop such a model:

- Managers do not consider evaluation to be important,
- Managers do not know how to evaluate training beyond the first level,
- There is no pressure from higher management to do more.

Although researchers and practitioners seem not to have systematically developed a better model of training evaluation, their work in the training evaluation area has contributed greatly to identifying the components which need to be included in any comprehensive model of training evaluation for use in today's environment.

**Understanding Kirkpatrick's model and its problems**

Using the term 'model' for Kirkpatrick's theory of evaluation seems very ambitious and it has led to a lot of debate amongst practitioners and researchers. A model can be defined as a representative form, style or pattern (Collins dictionary, 1995) and Kirkpatrick's (1998) theory does not seem to fulfill this definition. Kirkpatrick's (1998) levels of evaluation appear to be systematic steps towards the evaluation of training programs. Evaluation of each level or step requires the evaluation of preceding levels or steps (Alliger and Janak, 1989., Kirkpatrick, 1998). A model, on the other hand, consists of a variety of variables that influence each other (Holton III, 1996). Even though Kirkpatrick (1998) has identified some elements which need to be considered when conducting an evaluation of training, he has failed to articulate the intervening variables such as motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, transfer climate, and job attitude, that might affect the training outcomes (Holton III, 1996). Therefore, it would seem that
Kirkpatrick’s four levels are not a model, but are more simply a procedure by which to evaluate training programs.

Bobko and Russel (1991) have labeled Kirkpatrick’s model as a taxonomy, which is merely a classification scheme. Klimoski (1991) believes it has failed to totally recognize all relevant variables and constructs underlying the phenomenon of attention, thus making validation unachievable (Holton III, 1996). Clement (1982), Noe and Schmitt (1986), Wexley and Baldwin (1986), Alliger and Janak (1989) have demonstrated a correlation between outcomes from within Kirkpatrick’s 4 levels. However, the concrete findings of each of their investigations are various, raising doubts about Kirkpatrick’s assumptions of linear causal relationships (Holton III, 1996). For example, Kirkpatrick (1998) says that other factors influence training effectiveness such as climate, individual motivation to learn and environment, thus suggesting the relationships between levels are not linear. On the other hand, he clearly implies a causal relationship between levels. For example, he states “if training is going to be effective, it is important that trainees react favorably and that without learning, no change in behavior will occur” (Kirkpatrick, 1998, p. 25). According to Holton III (1996, p. 7), “the problem is not that it is a taxonomy but rather that it makes or implies causal statements leading to practical decisions that are outside the bounds of taxonomies”.

Reactions and learning

According to (Kirkpatrick, 1998) to achieve the bottom lines of training programs, managers have to be able to demonstrate and ensure that training participants react favorably. Nevertheless a study by Alliger and Janak (1989) has found that positive reactions do not necessarily lead to learning but may act as a mediator of learning (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, and Salas, 1992). Further, Dixon (1990), Warr and Bunce (1995) found little or no significant correlation between reactions and learning. However,
Patrick (1992) said that trainees’ reactions could play a role in building interest and attention and thus enhance the motivation to learn. Even though trainees’ reactions are not directly related to learning outcomes, a positive reaction could still be a good indication that training programs are useful (Kirkpatrick, 1998) as it may encourage trainees to pay attention and learn. Indeed, Holton III (1996, p. 10) supported this by saying “more positive reactions to training may aid learning, and trainees who are more successful during learning are expected to have more positive reactions to the learning experience”.

**Behavior and results**

Kirkpatrick has defined behavior “as the extent to which change in behavior has occurred because the participants attended the training program” (Kirkpatrick, 1998, p. 48). Holton III (1996) used individual performances to measure training outcomes. Furthermore, Holton III (1996), Warr, Allan and Birdi (1999) said that organizationally bottom lines can be achieved as a result of changes in individual performances. Cooke (2000) stated that if an individual can perform jobs better this might affect organizational results. Cooke (2000) gave the following example; sales training could support a bank’s goal to increase loans provided to customers and could be measured by measuring the amount of loans and dollars sold by each employee. It appears that changes in any individual’s performance in the workplace might influence organizational results.

However, to determine that a single training activity is the cause of any such change is logically dubious (Warr et al, 1999). Cooke (2000) also stated that multiple measures of variables affecting performances need to be conducted in order to determine causes of changes in organizational performance.
Issues in Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model

The strength of Kirkpatrick’s model lies in its straightforwardness and its ability to assist people conducting evaluations of training programs. At the same time, however, its easily adopted criteria and its assumptions could lead to misunderstandings in its application and over generalizations of its results (Alliger and Janak, 1989). For example, Kirkpatrick (1998) suggests that to evaluate training effectiveness, managers should evaluate at all of the four levels. The reason for this is because different levels provide different kinds of information (Bramley and Kitson, 1994).

However, it is not clear that all training in organizations is designed to cause change at all four levels. For example, if training is meant to effect technical skills then evaluation may be best carried out at the performance (level three). Similarly, if the training program is limited to providing general knowledge of a current economic situation, it may be best measured by growth in knowledge (level two). Another training program could be aimed at changing how front line staff communicate with customers and so might be most appropriately measured, by behavior change (level three) and results (level four). If evaluations were conducted at all 4 levels of Kirkpatrick’s model in these instances, the lack of outcomes in some levels may be misinterpreted as indicative of poor training.

Reaction has been used widely as the first level of evaluation of training programs (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Alliger and Janak (1989) have argued that each level of evaluation in Kirkpatrick’s model contributes to outcomes at the subsequent higher level. However, Dixon (1990) demonstrated that there is little correlation between trainees’ reactions and learning and a study conducted by Warr and Bunce (1995) also found that there is no significant correlation between reactions and learning but that positive reaction can enhance motivation to learn (Patrick, 1992). This point, however, is contested by Noe.
and Schmitt (1986), and Mathieu et al (1992) who found that reactions functioned as a moderator of the relationship between training motivation and learning as well as a moderator of other levels. Kirkpatrick (1998) himself stated that it is important to get a positive reaction because it motivates trainees to learn. Thus, there appears to be no conclusive evidence of the exact nature of the role of reaction in enhancing learning despite its widespread use and general acceptance in training program evaluation.

However, the model is indeed a hierarchical one with each succeeding level aiming for an increasingly complex assessment of training impact (Mitchell, 1994). Alliger and Janak (1989) accept the hierarchical nature of the model, but question the assumption that outcomes at each level must be positive for a training program to be effective. For example: reaction may be evaluated as negative, yet trainees may still want to learn. Managers can use this negative result at the reaction level of evaluation to renew or change the program. In this instance the initial level of evaluation does affect the next level as is assumed in Kirkpatrick’s hierarchical approach to evaluation, yet a negative outcome can result in interventions which overcome this result. Thus, conducting an evaluation at the level of reaction can be seen as imperative to ensure that learning will occur regardless of either a positive or negative response at this level. If learning occurs then the next question is whether trainees transfer learning to the workplace.

Evaluating level 3 or behavior changes is difficult, because thorough evaluations of behavioral change require a systematic appraisal of job performance both before and after course completion (Faerman and Ban, 1993). Moreover, if possible, multiple individuals, including the individual receiving the training, the persons’ supervisors, and their peers, should undertake these appraisals. This is known as 360-degree feedback (Bramley, 1996). In addition, some training managers may be resistant to conducting third level evaluation because they are afraid they might find their programs are indeed
ineffective (Faerman and Ban, 1993). While these reasons may underlie the general resistance to increased evaluation of training activities, training managers also seem to believe that behavioral evaluations are not really necessary because they assume that the four levels of evaluation criteria suggested by Kirkpatrick are positively correlated (Clement, 1982., Alliger and Janak, 1989., Faerman and Ban, 1993). This assumption suggests that, to some extent, when training participants feel positively about their experiences (level one) and report on them as relevant to their work environment thus facilitating their learning (level two), they are likely to transfer their learning to the work environment (level three), thus resulting in the enhancement of both individual and organizational performance (level four).

An additional concern is raised by Holton III (1996) who states that Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model has failed to include intervening variables that might affect training outcomes. For example, if the four levels of outcomes are assessed and a weak correlation is reported between levels two and three, the possible conclusion is that learning from training was not linked with behavior change, that is, that the training program failed in this area. However, according to Holton III (1996), if intervening variables that are currently unmeasured are measured, it is quite possible that the problem lies outside the classroom with some element of the organization, job or individual which constitutes an intervening variable. When intervening variables are measured in addition to Kirkpatrick’s four levels of outcomes, then it seems possible to provide comprehensive data to gauge the effectiveness of training programs (Dixon, 1996). Cooke (2000) concurs, stating that evaluating training programs cannot be carried out in a simple way but needs to include various intervening variables such as motivation to learn, environment, transfer conditions, job attitudes, trainees’ ability, and so forth in order to provide complete, relevant, and accurate evaluation data.
Summary

Kirkpatrick's evaluation model has been widely accepted and the model implies that conducting an evaluation is a relatively standardized process. Indeed the model offers some flexibility, is simple, and can assist in the contemplation of training evaluation criteria. Most practitioners demand an evaluation model that is workable, and Kirkpatrick's theory seems to fulfill this expectation. However, attempting to measure Kirkpatrick's four levels is not the simple matter it may seem and it would be premature to conclude that each level affects the subsequent level without considering other intervening variables such as motivation to learn, transfer conditions, environment, personality characteristics, job attitudes, trainees' ability. It appears difficult to isolate and show the effects of formal training as the sole and independent variable influencing the effectiveness of any training activities. In fact, there are many intervening variables that can impact within each of Kirkpatrick's levels and so affect organizational results. Kirkpatrick's model seems to overlook the importance of such intervening variables. As a result, it appears that Kirkpatrick's four levels cannot be validated without measuring and accounting for the effects of intervening variables. Despite this, Kirkpatrick's model may be adequate for others who demand a simple model, which they can understand and which allows them to get started on the evaluation of training programs.

Research agenda

Over the last several years, there has been a significant increase in the number of articles and books written on issues related to evaluating training programs. Articles and books on evaluation design, evaluation techniques, evaluation theories as well as evaluation models offer evaluation scholars and practitioners research outcomes and practical techniques for addressing methods of conducting evaluation training programs.
However, one topic on which little has been written is the importance of intervening variables when evaluating training programs. The discussion highlights a number of reasons for including intervening variables in evaluating training programs which seem neglected in research.

##
References


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Dear Andreas,

Terribly sorry not to have contacted you before now but we have had one or two internal problems here at UQ. I am pleased to say that your paper titled 'Evaluating training programs: an exploratory study of transfer of learning onto the job at Hotel A and Hotel B, Sydney, Australia' has been accepted for publication in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management Vol 11 No 1 which is due for publication in January 2004. Our publishers will be in touch in due course.

Congratulations

Kind regards

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Evaluating training programs

Evaluating training programs: an exploratory study of transfer of learning onto the job at Hotel A and Hotel B, Sydney, Australia

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Evaluating training programs: an exploratory study of transfer of learning onto the job at Hotel A and Hotel B, Sydney, Australia

ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry seems to be facing increasingly competitive pressures to improve the quality of its delivery of products and services. To maintain the level of service, thus hotels provide training for employees. Training effectiveness can in part be determined by examining the transfer of learning to the workplace (Noe, 1986; Holton III, Bates, Seyler and Carvalhol, 1997, and Kirkpatrick, 1998). Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model was chosen to investigate the training program effectiveness. This research employed two methods to collect data. The first was distribution of a questionnaire and the second involved interviewing the trainees. Overall, the trainees reacted positively to the training program. As a consequence, trainees were motivated to learn and this led them to increase their knowledge, acquire new skills and demonstrate a positive attitude. An interview was conducted to gather stories from trainees to find out how they applied learning to their workplaces. The weak point of this exploratory research is that the response rate, which is very limited.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the hospitality industry appears to be facing increasingly competitive pressures to improve the quality of its delivery of products and services. One mechanism for improving quality is through improvements in the technical skills of the employees delivering the products and services (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990). For many hotels, success depends largely on the availability of qualified employees who are able to deliver and consistently maintain their company’s operational standards of service. Thus, many hotels now emphasize training activities for employees as a means of providing an outstanding service for their customers.
Melia (1992) stated that training for employees is crucial in the hospitality industry simply because training for them involves rendering a friendly service and keeping hotels competitive and profitable.

However, little research has been done on evaluating training in the hospitality industry for employees. Most of the training that does occur is for managers (Herman and Eller, 1991). In addition, the lack of research underpinning training evaluation procedures is a weak point in the area of Human Resource Development (Holton III, 1996). Questions have been raised whether the hospitality industry spent money on training activities is being spent wisely. Newstorm (1986 cited in Faerman and Ban, 1993) stated that too much money and attention are spent on the design and delivery of programs and not enough on efforts to increase the transfer of training to the work environment. These have led to increased interest in the evaluation of training programs for employees on the part of both academics and practitioners. Therefore, research needs to be carried out to investigate the effectiveness of training programs in the hospitality industry for employees.

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

A critical issue with any training program is the successful transfer of learning on to the job (Ford, Quinones, Sego, and Sorra, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1998). The study of transfer of learning is important to all organisations, which are concerned not only with increasing productivity and performance improvement but, also with the way people interact, that is how they relate to one another (Mbawo, 1995). In the context of an organisation’s training program, the word ‘transfer’ refers to a trainee’s application to the job of what is learned (Burke, 1997). Transfer of learning, in this context, can be defined as the degree to which trainees apply to their jobs the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes they
obtained in training (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992; Holton III et al, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Burke and Baldwin, 1999).

The criterion of successful training is the application of the newly acquired skills and knowledge to the workplace (Holton III et al, 1997). Baldwin and Ford (1988 cited in Holton III et al, 1997; Goldstein, 1986; Wexley and Latham, 1991 cited in Holton III, et al, 1997) have highlighted a number of factors that might impact on transfer of learning and one of these is the extent to which the trainee is given the opportunity to perform the tasks taught in training sessions on the job. According to Ford et al (1992) and Holton III et al (1997) the opportunity to perform depends upon the work experiences of trainees after the training, the tasks set by the supervisor and also the effort of trainees to obtain work experiences relevant to the tasks for which they were trained.

There is evidence that argues for the importance of the work environment in effecting transfer of learning. For example, Baldwin and Magiuka (1991, cited in Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh, 1995) demonstrated that three organisational factors that positively influence trainees' intentions to apply what they have learned to their jobs. These are (1) when trainees received relevant information before the training program, (2) when trainees recognised they would be held accountable for learning and (3) when trainees perceived training as mandatory. In addition to the importance of the work environment, the time period directly after training appears most suitable to evaluating the outcomes of transfer of learning (Wexley and Baldwin, 1986). Several authors suggest that post training transfer interventions must be explored to ensure that training programs have an impact on job performance (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Noe and Ford, 1992; Tannenbaum, Mathieu, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers, 1991; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992).
Although some conceptual work has been done in this area in recent years, rigorous empirical investigation of transfer of learning remains scarce (Burke, 1997). Several studies, which have attempted to evaluate transfer of learning, emphasised numerical findings (Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993; Ford et al, 1992; Holton Ill et al, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998). However, this paper argues that statistical measures alone cannot portray the quality and nature of the outcomes of transfer of learning. Cooke (2000) pointed out that we deal with people, so getting participants' comments about training programs will better help to determine the effectiveness of training programs.

The Kirkpatrick (1998) four-stage evaluation model is a commonly employed framework for understanding and evaluating training programs (Carnevale and Schutz, 1990; Tannenbaum and Woods, 1992; Faerman and Ban, 1993). For years, training practitioners have often relied on various applications of Donald Kirkpatrick's evaluation model (1959 – 1998), also known as the four-level evaluation model as a basic framework for identifying the different outcomes of training (Faerman and Ban, 1993), which is as follows:

Level 1: reaction; did training participants like the training? Trainee's reactions to a program are usually recorded merely in terms of satisfaction or enjoyment.

Level 2: learning; did trainees understand the information during training?

Level 3: behaviour; did the training help you do your job better and increase performance? Determining if employees apply what they learned to their workplaces.

Level 4: results; did the hotel or department increase profits, customer satisfaction, and so forth as a result of the training?.
Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model has been widely accepted and the model implies that conducting an evaluation is a relatively standardised process (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1998). Indeed the model offers some flexibility, is simple, and can assist in the contemplation of training evaluation criteria (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

However, exploring stories has never been a popular method of training evaluation research and collecting trainees’ points of view has been given little attention. Even though a recent review of training research revealed that most investigations of training success have measured the amount of learning that has occurred by the end of a training session rather than on the job performance, little research has been done in exploring the stories of trainees once they return to their workplaces (Baldwin and Ford, 1988 cited in Holton III et al, 1997; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Cooke, 2000). Asking trainees about training programs is imperative to ensure that trainees have learned something and to help to ascertain whether the training program was beneficial (Kirkpatrick, 1998 and Cooke, 2000). Therefore, in order to provide reliable information for the debate on how transfer of learning can be maximised, this paper will firstly, distribute a questionnaire to trainee and, secondly, will conduct interviews to obtain the stories of trainees which describe how training activities have helped them perform their jobs.
RESEARCH DESIGN

Research settings

This research will investigate supervisory training program at Hotel A and Hotel B in Sydney. The people who were trained were high potential, on-deck and new supervisors. The trainees came from Hotel A and Hotel B and represented every department. The programs consisted of 16 modules of classroom instruction in the areas of leadership and motivation, communications, problem solving, managing workflows and time management, as well as coaching/counselling, recruitment and selection of staff, interview skills, performance appraisal, conducting meetings, budget, and setting personnel policies. The modules were of 3 or 4 hours duration and were presented on 1 day of each week for 16 weeks. The training began with an introduction to the training modules’ content, their objectives, how the course was to run and an outline of the topics. The trainees were then asked their goals in relation to the company’s goals. This was to determine whether their goals were aligned with the organisations’ goals in providing the training. The facilitator motivated trainees to attend all modules by explaining how each was related to the other. In addition, the facilitator encouraged trainees to apply and exercise newly acquired knowledge and skills and positive attitudes in their workplaces and also encouraged them to develop an action learning journal in which they recorded how they had applied learning from the modules into their daily work (refers to trainers directed learning, Nadler and Nadler 1994). This action-learning journal was used firstly, to monitor how useful each module was and how trainees applied it and in what situations. Secondly, the action-learning journal was utilised to encourage trainees to learn from each other. Trainees were asked to share their journals. The advantages of this were that it gave the facilitator the possibility to re-
write the training materials and also determined how well connected the modules were with the trainee's departments. For example, a trainee from department F & B at Hotel A described a problem in his/her area. Then the trainee adopted one of the principles from the module on problem solving and the problem was solved. When the training began, the trainee shared this story and this was used as an example of how helpful the course could be.

Research aims

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of supervisory training program at Hotel A and Hotel B in Sydney by examining the transfer of learning to the workplace.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study investigated trainees’ experiences of transfer of learning to their workplaces at Hotel A and Hotel B. A quantitative approach was used to permit to a focus on specific issues and actions rather than on abstract theories (Mbawo, 1995) by distributing questionnaires to the trainees to seek trainees’ reactions.

In addition, this paper used a qualitative case study approach to the research process. According to Wood and Catanzaro (1988: 533) case study can be defined as:

“an intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community, or some other unit, typically conducted under naturalistic conditions, in which the investigator examines in depth data related to background, current status, environmental characteristics and interactions”

As Stake (1995) stated a case study may be conducted when the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction in that which is
known. There is a dearth of recorded research findings investigating trainees’ story in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, Yin (1989:14) suggested that “the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events”. This is a reason for the choice of this method for this study. Rather than relying on a single case design where one particular trainee was investigated as single ‘case’, many stories were deliberately heard involving numerous strategies and difficulties of transferring learning on the job. As was hoped, themes and categories emerged from a comparison of the stories, whilst recognition remained that each case had its own unique characteristics (Swanson-Kauffman, 1986: 65). Phenomenological studies, especially, should be concerned with the data and should, therefore, use non-probability sampling, with informants chosen because they have lived the experience.

Sample and procedures

The sample recruited for this research is designated to trainees undertaking supervisory training programs at Hotel A and Hotel B. Two groups of trainees (Hotel A, N = 12 and Hotel B, N = 5) participated in the supervisory training programs. Of the 17 trainees, 2 were female and the rest were male. Their tenure as full time employees varied from 2 - 5 years. This research is an exploratory study thus it wants to obtain a sample of specific individuals.

Prior to making contact with respondents, some key ethical issues had to be considered such as the need for voluntary participation of informants, the paramount importance of the privacy of the respondent —especially given a workplace context, and assurance of confidentiality (Lipson, 1994).
Survey questionnaire development

Before distributing the questionnaire, the trainees were informed in detail of the purpose of the research and of the interview procedure using plain English. In addition, they were informed of their freedom to withdraw or refuse to participate. The questionnaire used a rating scale of options for the respondents to select from. The scales were numbered as follows: ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree.

The questionnaires were left in the HR office for the trainees to collect along with envelopes for their return. The completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes to the HR office for collection by the researcher.

The entire population of trainees’ involved in the training program under investigation was invited to attend. Given the nature of this research which involved voluntary participation, free of rewards and punishments, and only 17 trainees were trained and just 8 questionnaires were returned, the researcher admitted that a response rate seems very limited. However, this can still be used to determine how effective the supervisory training program provided for them.

Interview development

To validate trainees’ views as ascertained in the questionnaire, a semi structured interview was conducted. This aimed to gather stories from the trainees after they had returned to their workplaces. The interview is one of the most important sources of case study information (Yin, 1989). Each trainee was interviewed twice for approximately 30 minutes to an hour on each occasion. The actual duration depended upon the trainee’s condition at the time. Arranging a series of
interviews allowed reflection on the transcripts of past interviews so as to gain as much interpretive insight as possible (van Manen, 1990: 99). The second interview proved to be extremely worthwhile as important information was volunteered, and trainee's answers were clarified, whilst emerging categories were validated. The interviews were recorded to give the fullest and most accurate record possible. Eight trainees were available to take part of this interview. This sample size is very limited. However, their stories of the usefulness of the training program and the application of such program into their workplaces provided useful information which is beneficial for both Hotel Managers, therefore, it seems adequate for this piece of research.

Data analysis

Questionnaire analysis

The first part of the questionnaire was analysed using a rating scale. Question 1 until question 5 asked about the course offered and focused on its objectivity, relevance to the job, its organisation and the extent to which it met the individual's expectations. The next section aimed to investigate the transfer of learning on the job, and focused on the importance of immediate boss encouraging his/her trainees to apply newly skills and knowledge to the workplace. The trainees indicated whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement and could make further comments if they wished.

Interview analysis

To analyse semi-structured interview, the researcher relied on transcription of the interviews as one source of raw data. The researcher read the transcripts and
listened to the interviews repeatedly. After getting some sense of a whole, a consistent approach was selected. In this study inductive analysis was used which means that "the patterns, themes and categories of analysis come for the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being decided prior to collection and analysis" (Patton, 1987: 150). A second meeting with the trainee aimed to validate and review what he or she had said and attempted to classify the trainee's comments. In this research, the paper did not dwell on categories but rather focused on the trainee's personal experience. The questions mainly focused on the trainee's day to day activities so the researcher was able to find out what strategies the trainees has applied to achieve better performance.

FINDINGS

Reaction level - employees' view

A questionnaire was distributed after the training program was completed. However, only 8 of 17 questionnaires were handed back and this gave a response rate of 47.05%. As stated previously, this response rate is insufficient, but arguably provided useful information.

Level 1: reaction.

Findings indicate that the trainees were satisfied. The evaluation which the level of reaction received, confirmed that trainees reacted positively to the course. Positive reactions increase trainees' receptivity to the knowledge and skills presented in the sessions. The majority of the trainees felt that the course objectives had been met and that the modules were highly relevant to their jobs. However, a few stated that the time
frame or time schedule should be more flexible or possibly re-arranged. This response may be the outcome of the training being scheduled in the middle of their shift so that their work environments sometimes impeded their punctual attendance at the training.

Learning level – employees’ view

Level 2: learning

Findings indicate that the trainees made gains in the knowledge and skills needed to be exercised in their new positions. Data gathered from the questionnaire indicate that the majority of the trainees have received great support from their immediate managers and the trainer to the application of newly acquired skills and knowledge.

Behaviour level – employees’ view

Findings show that the trainees were motivated by their immediate boss to transfer their new skills. More importantly the findings reveal that the managers recognised the trainees’ performances and rewarded them. Furthermore, the managers always encouraged and assisted the trainees to perform better and gave them the flexibility to decide the best way to complete tasks. However, one trainee stated he had difficulty in applying new skills to his new workplace because he needed more time to adjust to his new work environment to ascertain how the skills could be best applied.

To substantiate the questionnaire findings this paper conducted interviews with the trainees to recapitulate their experiences, perceptions and the values they attach to their experiences on the job as well as to find out how the trainees actually transferred learning to their new workplace.
**Interview respondents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel A</th>
<th>Position interviewed</th>
<th>Hotel B</th>
<th>Position interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Banquet supervisor</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Sauce de Chef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>Manager at ‘R’ nightclub</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Supervisor at engineering department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Supervisor at ‘H’ bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Supervisor at ‘R’ nightclub and ‘C’ bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Food and beverage supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Vice supervisor at ‘C’ bar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Initial A, U, T, S, M, N, Y, and Z represent the first word of their name

**Interview findings**

The interview transcripts ranged in size from one page to two pages. Each respondent shared his/her experience on the job. Each will be discussed further. The quotes cited here were gathered from trainees and highlight which aspects of their workplaces facilitated the transfer of learning.

**Motivating staff**

*Motivation is being recognized as the main tool to enhance staff’s performance on the job. Effective discussion (e.g. how to bring different ideas together, accept different thoughts, etc) provide useful tool to boost staff’s motivation at work.*

(Supervisor at ‘H’ bar)

*Managing stress, communicating change and enhancing motivation are very handy … if you are assigned to take care of two things at once … therefore you need to be able to communicate well to your superior as well to your subordinates and be able to motivate your employees to do well.*

(Supervisor at ‘R’ nightclub and ‘C’ bar)
Communicating

Trainees being interviewed acknowledged the importance of effective communication with their subordinates and with their managers. According to trainees effective communication can be defined as both sides (supervisor and subordinates, supervisor and managers, and subordinates and managers) listening to the other when making decisions.

How to handling complaints and communicating change sessions to me are very useful where we (manager and supervisor) have to listen to the staff. It never happened before ... in other words ... we never listened ... now ... we have to change our approach.
(Manager at 'R' nightclub)

Communicating with your subordinates as well as to your supervisor, delegating and trusting your mates are essential.
(Supervisor at engineering department)

In addition, some trainees clearly explained how effective communication affects their department.

I am able to communicate a lot better now. I listen to staff ... what the problems they encounter ... and yes ... absolutely listen to everybody. That's the key in this industry. I do not have any problem in this new position ... again I am telling you ... if you want to be a good supervisor ... you must listen. It affects the whole operation in this department.
(Manager at 'R' nightclub)

...I found it is quite cooperative where people communicate to each other and ensure that everyone works together. To achieve that therefore you must be able how to speak ... respect to your colleagues is very important here.
(Supervisor at 'H' bar)
Organising and planning

Trainees realised that being able to motivate employees and communicate effectively was insufficient to improve their performance. They also needed to organise and plan to meet the specific goals and objectives of their own departments.

*I notice that planning and organising is good session ... I know now how to plan and organize better for the bar.*
(Vice supervisor at 'C' bar)

*I would like to emphasize most important thing I learned was organising and planning ... Clearly if I committed to what I am doing now, I believe my subordinates will do the same thing.*
(Sauce de Chef)

Training within department

One module that was seen as important by trainees was the module on how to train staff on the job within the department.

*Motivation, selecting employees, training sessions are very helpful to me ... specially when I deal with casual employees. Thus I realize how to recruit, select, train and motivate casual people effectively.*
(Food and beverage supervisor at Hotel A)

Bramley (1996) and Coffman (1990) point out that to evaluate the effectiveness of any training program it is necessary to also ask managers’ points of view and allow them to get involved in training evaluation. This is simply because managers will be able to see the value of the training in relation to the organisation’s goals. Obtaining multiple viewpoints on the effectiveness of training programs can improve the validity of the final evaluation of such programs (Coffman, 1990). Thus, in this research, it is also crucial to ask the manager about the current training programs and how the manager sees the importance of encouraging trainees to apply what they have learned. The next
paragraph shows the each of Hotel Training Manager's comments on supervisory training program.

*My primary objective is ensuring that the trainees have learned something and encouraging them to apply new skills back to their job. To find out that trainees maintain their performance, the hotel will use performance appraisal once a year. This will tell you exactly how they have performed over a year. From the time during training I see some trainees have applied their newly skills to their workplaces. One trainee came to me and said that motivating staff has helped the bar works better in the sense now we realize the importance of teamwork. (Training Manager at Hotel A)*

*I did not ask how the training program has helped them in their workplaces, but they always share stories in the class how they applied any particular modules on their jobs. Few of them told the difficulties of applying the programs given they need more time to adapt and adjust in the their new work environments. If some of them did not apply newly skills and knowledge, it does not necessarily mean that the program offered is irrelevant or unhelpful or useless. Perhaps the work situation does not need to apply any of the modules but generally speaking the participants found the modules are useful. It is only a matter of time to transfer what they learned to their job.*

(Training Manager at Hotel B)
DISCUSSION

As the previously stated, even though the response results were limited, this paper provided valid stories from trainees and explores how they have transferred learning to their jobs. From the findings, it can be seen that although the trainees’ reactions to training are clearly not the sole indicator of effectiveness, it is possible that their reactions represent one variable that is part of the larger context of influences on training effectiveness. According to Morgan and Casper (2000) trainees’ reactions are a potential predictor of the more costly criteria of training effectiveness measures of learning, measures of job performance and measures of organisational results. Thus, trainees’ reactions can be used as predictors of actual learning, transfer of learning to the job, job performance, and organisational results.

However, previous studies found that positive reactions may not contribute to learning and transfer of learning and discovered little or no significant correlation between reactions and learning (Alliger and Janak, 1989; Dixon, 1990; Warr and Bunce, 1995; Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver, and Shotland, 1997. Holton III (1996) also argued that trainees’ reactions could not be included as a training outcome.

Nevertheless positive reactions may maintain or improve motivation to learn and so act as a mediator of learning in which role they can serve as predictors of learning, performance and results (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, and Salas, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Morgan and Casper, 2000). This view is supported by Patrick (1992) and Kirkpatrick (1998) who state that trainees’ reactions can play a role in building interest and attention and thus enhance their motivation to learn and could still be a good indication that training programs are useful. Although current HRD literature has criticised the state of evaluation research and the use of reactions as training criteria, trainees’ reactions
remain the most frequently used means by which to evaluate training (Holton III, 1996; Preskill, 1997 cited in Preskill, 1999; Morgan and Casper, 2000).

The need to understand conditions in which trainees can apply the learning they acquired to their work situations has been seen as imperative (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980). In particular, there is a need to understand the way in which the trainees transfer of learning from the class into their work situation. Thus, understanding the work situation of the trainees can help to effectively investigate transfer of learning. Stiefel (1974, cited in Huczynski and Lewis, 1980) described the transfer of learning as involving both the ability to apply what has been learned and the possibility of using it in the organisational situation.

Given this research was based on very limited responses, the investigation has revealed that different trainees have employed a number of strategies for enhancing transfer of learning after attending training programs in the workplace. These stories were collected after the trainees had completed their training programs. This paper argues in support of the view that the period after training seems to be the most crucial in facilitating positive transfer (Wexley and Baldwin, 1986; Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Noe and Ford, 1992; Tannenbaum et al, 1991; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992). The trainees admitted that the training provided had motivated them to work better on the job. As stated by Manager at ‘R’ nightclub “how to handling complaints and communicating change sessions to me are very useful where we (manager and supervisor) have to listen to the staff. It never happened before ... in other words ... we never listened ... now ... we have to change our approach”. In addition, a Supervisor at ‘H’ bar also stated “motivation is being recognized as the main tool to enhance staff’s performance on the job. Effective discussion (e.g. how to bring different ideas together, accept different thoughts, etc) provide useful tool to boost staff’s motivation at work”.
The trainees learned a lot and the training provided was deemed appropriate to their work situations by the trainees, in the sense of training modules corresponding to their jobs. The findings supported this (see level 1: reaction result; Kirkpatrick' reaction level). One trainee admitted that the modules did not contain new materials but the trainee found them useful in refreshing his memories (see Hotel B Training Manager' comment).

The trainees of both hotels pointed out that their work environments are very supportive, allowing each trainee to apply new skills and that, more importantly, their managers always encouraged them to work as part of a team which provided them with an immediate context for the application of their new skills (see level 2: learning result; Kirkpatrick learning level and during training session). In addition, Manager at 'R' nightclub supported this by saying "... we (manager and supervisor) have to listen to the staff. It never happened before ... in other words ... we never listened ... now ... we have to change our approach. This is also supported from the findings (level 3: behaviour result; Kirkpatrick behaviour level).

Indeed, the trainees argue that the learning process is a continual activity both on and off the job. Even though the trainees did not mention the term learning culture explicitly, they admit that continuous learning had a direct effect on their ability to perform any tasks given. Hogan (2001) supported this by saying continuing learning is essential for continued success and learning is a critical component of training activities in the hospitality industry. Their stories also confirmed that trainees have the opportunity to perform with support from their managers and that having the opportunity to perform is considered essential to allowing the trainees to use new skills (see Training Manager' comment at Hotel B; Ford et al, 1992).
It can be said that as a result of trainees attending supervisory training program, trainees improved their skills, gained knowledge, had positive attitudes and more importantly have transferred their learning to their jobs (see interview findings for details). Both hotels believed that the current training programs assist trainees to learn to improve themselves in ways that are meaningful to them (see Training Managers' comments at Hotel A and Hotel B). Therefore, supervisory training program conducted at Hotel A and Hotel B in Sydney appears to be effective in these areas.
CONCLUSION

Even though the response results were limited, this exploratory research provided valid empirical findings and interview results demonstrated how trainees have transferred learning to their jobs. This research indicates that, to conduct training evaluation, the period immediately after training completed is very important to obtain trainees' reactions to the course content, the course usefulness and its relevance to their workplaces. This research has been limited to investigating only two hotels in Sydney and received very limited response rate. Consequently, the results may not be generalisable. Even though it was not the aim of this research, it would be better if this research was undertaken at many hotels and numerous service sectors with large response rate.
RESEARCH IMPLICATION

Many researchers are concerned with the evaluation of training programs, especially at the third level of Kirkpatrick's model. However, it appears that many researchers rely on numerical findings and single instances of empirical research to do this. On the one hand this might give accurate results for that one program or industry. On the other, the results cannot automatically be generalised across industries or even workplaces within an industry. In contrast, many qualitative models have been all embracing, but rarely have they been supported by any empirical data. As an alternative, this paper offers a less embracing conception of the factors, which influence training transfer, but one which is research based. This research employed a case study approach. Although, this study received inadequate responses, the findings can be used as a basis for a more comprehensive study.

One important aspect is whether trainees are given the opportunity to perform with support from their superiors and workplace equals. Of added value is the opportunity for the trainees to discuss problems in the workplace with someone in their department, preferably their immediate boss. Such discussions would include how and where the learning might be subsequently applied in the organisation and to what end. In addition, the trainees are given opportunities to apply the best strategies of enhancing learning transferred. This is the time for managers to encourage workplace supervisors to allow time for trainees to adapt to their new workplaces before exercising newly acquired skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the work situation can usefully be conceived of as a place providing opportunities to perform, and this approach can encourage the introduction and application of new skills.

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