

Influences on careers in the tourism industry

Helen Ayres

University of Canberra

Background to study

- Significant industry - 551,000
- Critical issue – retention and training
- Emerging tertiary courses
- Jobs plentiful – careers a new trend
- Relatively few studies of employment in tourism – variations on traditional career models

My background - interest

- University Tourism Program Director
 - Student job search, career planning
 - Positions and opportunities
- Consultancy and research projects
 - Role of human resource management
- Judge in local tourism awards
 - Successful tourism enterprises
 - Highly motivated, entrepreneurial people

Pilot Study

- Aim
 - Explore key issues impacting on careers
 - Expose patterns and trends in career development
- Sample
 - 12 Organisations in 2 States
 - 12 Senior managers
 - 12 middle managers
- Method
 - Interviews of approx 1.5 hours

Findings - pilot

- High levels of mobility
- Increasing importance of education
- Mentoring
- Opportunistic career development strategies

Major study

- Electronic surveys
- 515 responses
 - All States and Territories represented
 - Wide range of tourism sectors
- What respondents perceive to be major influences on their careers
 - 536 influences reported
 - 3 categories
 - Situational (65%)
 - Motivational (59%)
 - Social (18.1%)

Situational influences

Education	20.5%
Mentors – co-workers/managers/networks	15.2%
Career/professional development opportunities	8.9%
Industry opportunities – being in the right place at the right time	7.6%
Mobility	7.3%
Working in a good location	5.8%

Situational influences

- Education

My Degree - Impact is large as without it I wouldn't have had the opportunity to work in the firms that I have been fortunate to work with.

Attending the Australian Business Academy lead to my decision to further my study in this field and attend university. University Study in Tourism majoring in Office Management lead to the job I currently have.

My university degree and my lecturers - taught me a lot about the tourism industry and showed me that this is the area I wanted to be in

Situational Influences

- Mentoring
 - *Co-workers/Managers have also had a major influence on my career in that I would not have envisioned myself in this position without their confidence and mentorship.*
 - *Great managers - When I first made the move from finance to project management, my manager encouraged me to make the move as he had faith in my abilities regardless of my lack of experience. I was the one who lacked confidence in making such a significant change so without his encouragement I would never have made the change which has led me to where I am now*

Mentoring

- Early in career important
 - *Support - a great mentor who has shaped my career (early in career)*
 - *Strong mentors- guidance & leadership have been critical factors early in the career path.*
- Relational or networks
 - *The people I have met in the tourism industry. I believe that through a variety of jobs and industry networks I have come to the position I am in today with Tourism Victoria.*
 - *...Networking and relationship building (has allowed for great business development). People I work with (good mentoring/coaching and leadership).*

- **Mobility**

- *Industry, organisation, job, location*
- *changing economic times, changing life style requirements, impatience with large organisations, all mean a constant review of what you do and where you do it. You change as needed and when needed. Staying put just because you know the desk is not a good option.*
- *Opportunity to work in several areas of a large travel company - promotion through the ranks to management level ... Mobility - early on in my career, the willingness to move to take opportunities and progress*

- Industry opportunities – being in right place at right time
 - *Being in the right place at the right time - allowing for some wonderful opportunities*
 - *In the early stages, luck was a factor! I had no idea what I wanted to do and a job in a five star hotel was offered to me via a contact.*
 - *Nothing was really planned. I just wanted to be a writer of sorts, achieved a journalism degree and fell into tourism. Somehow I've become a marketing/design/promotion person with a media influence...*

Motivational Influences

A passion for the industry	24.2%
Opportunity to travel	14.4%
The Challenge/ambition	7.3%
Financial rewards	6.3%
Independence/flexibility	5.3%
Need for variety and change	1.8%

Motivational influences

- Passion for industry
 - The most common influence on careers in tourism
 - Over one quarter of respondents
 - Challenge

Social influences

- Not a major influence
 - Should not be ignored
 - Importance of aspect of tourism – meeting new people, lifestyle

Importance of study

- Tourism industry HRM
 - Understanding patterns of behaviour
 - Understanding career development strategies
 - Assist policy development
 - Assist organisation to reap rewards of education and training

Importance of study

- Tourism/hospitality education
 - Link career progression to educational qualifications
 - Does not add to ongoing debate about what should be taught in associated courses
 - Highlights importance of education and training on career progression

Importance of study

- Future tourism employees
 - Understand careers in tourism
 - Assist with decision on level and type of education
 - Use of internal and external labour markets
 - Embrace mentoring relationships
 - Work on career development strategy.