

## **Staffing Crisis in Tourism**

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Australia's wellbeing relies on a diversity of industries. Leaders in tourism – private and public - must plan and prepare for the future by confronting “worker” issues head-on.

Tourism suffers from a public **perception** of hard work, long hours and little reward – no family life too. This may all be true, but to attract workers, community perceptions must be **reshaped to portray Tourism in a positive and attractive light**. Additionally, Tourism needs to gain the respect of the community as a serious career. This will occur only when the industry begins respecting itself and recognising the true value of its skill-base. An advertising and public relations campaign could be useful...

Low pay, low savings - unpleasant hours, working weekends, serving ungrateful customers and a solid ceiling preventing advancement - does not attract, nor help a worker's prospects. For this, workers receive \$14.50 an hour – and that's if you are lucky to have a full-time job. This rate is uncompetitive in the labour market. Perceptions are reality.

**Tourism workers, as all workers need to be able to satisfy their basic needs.** Workers need to feed and cloth and shelter themselves. Presently these needs are not satisfied. Tourism workers spend their days and nights caring for people. Who really cares about them? My workmates all comment how difficult it is to survive. These are people who have worked between 20 years and 12 months.

**Workers are more likely to be retained when offered - strong leadership, interesting work, a fair work environment, purposeful training, and career development. Include more to attract workers - bonus', incentives, dividends, meals and above award leave entitlements and lifestyle initiatives will create interest in the industry. However - I hear that money talks.**

Tourism is losing its talent or not attracting it in the first place. If we all want to enjoy our cappuccinos', spaghetti bolognaise, a beer, an overnight stay or a crispy duck – reward your workers! Otherwise the industry will fall further into crisis. Presently, there is little mention of the ability of workplaces to reward staff with above award payments – this needs to be celebrated as an incentive to work harder and more efficiently. Not hidden.

Together we must address the needs of the worker more generously. Our industry rides on the smiles of our workers. No workers – no smiles. No smiles makes Australia an unattractive tourism destination. Do something to put a smile on the face of a Tourism worker today.

### **Promotion 1.**

Work a week: Holiday a week

Get a taste for the work by experiencing the work and the relaxation of the industry. You will see why your work is so highly valued – by being the guest and then you get the opportunity to give back your high-level expectation of service. Discover tourism.

### **Promotion 2.**

#### **Idea script for an advertisement to promote the Tourism sector employment opportunities**

“Tourism? What do I have to do?”

“Smile”

“Smile?”

“Yes – the most valuable thing you can do is – smile”

“That’s easy”

“We’ll pay you for it too!”

“What do I do then?”

“Listen.”

“Listen to what?”

“Listen to the needs of the guest and then do your best to satisfy that need.”

“Sounds pretty simple.”

“It is – then we need you to do something else...”

“Uh oh!”

“All you do then is share your passion for your favourite shops, cafes, towns, beaches, galleries, shows museums – the history, surfing spots, markets – everything you love about your country – tell the guest – share your passion for life.”

“Why?”

“Well – more than anything, you make the difference to their experience. You add value to their time here. They’ll never forget that!”

“Wow”

You know - we need passionate people. We need to share what makes this country great – and different. All over the world are beaches, sunsets, mountains, lakes, buildings and golf courses and forests....”

“Yea.”

“Well what makes Australia different?”

“...Me?”

“Yes. You – you make Australia unique. We need more passionate people like YOU.”

“So I get paid to be ME, and share my fav spots and have fun at work.”

“It might not always be fun.”

“Yea, yea – but it is simple.”

“Smile and share your passions.”

“I am you-nique”

“You are unique, happy and enthusiastic”

“I can do that.”

“Yes. You can.”

*This can be a conversation on a park bench, school counselor room, seniors meeting room, migrant centre, café etc – same script with varying actors and backgrounds.*

## **Why have I stayed working in the Tourism industry so long?**

Fear of Change

Difficulties to overcome to achieve change

Workplace Respect

Relationships

### **1. Fear of Change**

I go through cycles in my career as a tourism professional. I consider how I can further my career. I consider that since income improvements favour those with further study – I must explore this option. I have watched as others have been given opportunities to advance with less experience, less commitment to the company, and sometimes an open expression of NOT liking what they do and bitching about Management – and they are promoted! It seems inequitable. I have also experienced the situation where an employee becomes so valuable in a hard-to-fill junior position, it is with much reluctance that the company will let them go to another department.

These employees continue to offer more value to the company but continue to receive the basic wage. Lack of flexibility provides certainty of income but doesn't reward excellent effort.

I found my job searching experience quite scary. I was continually put down in interviews, made aware of deficiencies and told "...we'll call you..." I never got calls. I wanted a job, was keen, and was almost dumb-founded why my interviewers doubted my passion to serve their company. Reality struck. Life isn't fair.

Now, with this experience, I am afraid of exposing myself to the world of skeptics. I would rather do what I can to make my work rewarding – and create a world away from work which I enjoy. People wish they had my lifestyle when I explain what I did through the week. But they made choices too. They chose to work long hours and have no personal time. Some of my choices were made for me – I have gone with the punches and made the most of the skills I have. I have taken responsibility for the value I derive from my work and personal Life.

I haven't wanted change but I have looked for interest and stimulation by adding value to my work in many unrecognized and sometimes taken-for-granted ways. I have also been recognised for other things which is very reassuring.

### **2. Difficulties to overcome to achieve change**

When I investigated study so that I could change my future income earning capacity, I encountered the reality of my capabilities. I wasn't going to be able to earn enough if I was to study full-time. I was not allowed to receive government support. If I study part-time I am not going to afford a quality life because I would be studying and working without time to rest and recover – my circumstances are unique. I know my limitations. I have tested them many times and become ill. It isn't worth it. I need to stay healthy. Then I will be happy. They are my priorities in Life. I have sought change but encountered challenges without a suitable solution in sight.

### **3. Workplace Respect**

I have developed a small network of contacts within my workplace and amongst the guests I serve. My workplace offers me a level of companionship and respect I do not achieve elsewhere in my daily life.

I receive more value “emotional-income” from my work than monetary reward. It is a shame that there is a trade-off. I know how much skill I deliver guests and it is worth more than the wage I earn. I am a professional. Pay peanuts and you get.... Unless people have a passion – then you have the underpaid, disadvantaged, migrants, second-jobbers. Under-educated, and the scared-to-change. Fortunately we all respect one-another. We understand our position and share the load. Those who don't - leave. Tourism relies upon Team players. Team players understand the role of the whole Team – and don't consider themselves above any duty or type of work- earn respect, give respect = work satisfaction.

### **4. Relationships**

Friendships and acquaintances based from the work environment are founded on trust, reliability and honesty. I have had extremely satisfying relationships with workmates from every continent on earth. This is an education in human relations. If you are not skilled in communication, or possess an oversized ego or hold deep prejudices the insincerity will be found-out. Strong relationships are hard-won. I have lots of satisfaction in my work because I have always aimed to treat people as an individual doing their best to get on with Life. I respect others. Some do not share this respect for me, until they need my assistance on some minor issue – or some basic understanding – then I am valuable. I am always happy to help. These encounters eventually result in mutual respect. Some workers however find this off-putting. They need status from income rather than the effort to earn respect. Earning respect takes time. Relationships are stronger when times are challenging. Bonds are created.

When organizations change Management, relationships are broken within the workplace and the culture changes sometimes to the short-term detriment of the staff-experience in the workplace. Give it 3 -5 years and the culture will again be similar to previous because Management move on. Their plans are almost always short-term. It costs valuable, talented people, but a core of hard-workers remain long-term and go with the changes. Those with the opportunity to study become impatient with the changes. Often the changes seem to show a lack of respect for the previous management style. The talent doesn't like this and moves on.

The industry as a whole probably benefits from this regular cycle of change as people become more experienced in the industry. The workers tend not to have the same flexibility because their skills are not rewarded/demanded by way of income improvement or condition improvement.

Relationships spread through the industry are a wonderful part of the business. Earned respect spreads far and wide and eventually shows up where you least expect it – when you visit the country pub, the local supermarket, the hotel or the golf course.

The skills of tourism work takes talented people far and wide throughout the economy.

Workforce Challenges –

### **How to Attract workers to the Tourism industry**

Set Objective – Make Tourism the #1 career choice by 2010

Promote a happy industry

Create an attractive alternative

Appeal to people with needs

#### **1. Promote a happy industry**

Appeal to passionate people

YOU are the difference. You make Australia YOU-nique campaign

#### **2. Create an attractive alternative**

Offer a way to improve life, relationships, family and health.

Offer a way out of a low economic circumstances

Provide an opportunity to earn a full-time wage and study without affecting health, family.

Offer unbeatable working conditions

- 10 weeks annual leave

- Pay which does not affect pensions

- Pick-up and drop-off child and senior care.

- free parking, bicycles and lockers, meals and uniforms.

#### **3. Appeal to peoples' needs**

Determine a fair pay living wage to support a family and home.

Develop an industry association

Create an industry website

Encourage worker swaps

Create an industry of workplaces where workers can systematically acquire and upgrade skills.

Recognise experience and skill development with yearly pay increases above cost-of-living increases.

## Why have I stayed in Tourism for so many years?

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Tourism allows me to use my **uniqueness as strengths**. Tourism satisfies my interests and fulfills a role as a piece of my social life.

This **socialisation** is important. Most guest relationships are based on simpler expressions of *courtesy and recognition*. Over many years, these interactions become strong *bonds*. I value these bonds.

My **workplace environment** also fosters *trust, integrity, honesty and reliability*. Management has shown *patience, gratitude, offered guidance and open appreciation* for good effort.

Throughout my career there have been **opportunities at work** to explore public speaking, writing - representative tasks. Opportunities create *variety and stimulation* creates *excitement and interest*. The opportunities I have encountered are all voluntary duties or short-term.

I have tried external study while working full-time but couldn't combine the two and achieve life-balance. I work where I am and **cannot move forward**, or upwards – another reason I stay...

I am able to **express my passion for Australia** to my guests. I enjoy my work because I am inquisitive and passionate about my country –the history, flora and fauna, industries and economy. This is not my job, however, I share this passion with my guests and I discover things which interested them during their travels. I learn as I work.

I have stayed in tourism for a long time because I love my work and I love being with people- then reading about history, the environment, famous people and “digging deeper into Australia”. Also, I have not made real efforts to change my career. I feel now, that my competitive advantage is of greatest value to tourism. So I stay.

Fair work for fair reward is a reason to remain in any industry. However, in Australia, quality service skills are not monetarily valued by the Award wage system or the customer. The skills of customer service in the tourism environment are however expected at any price – the lowest. As long as I can't afford to study (I would study Tourism and Business) I will be staying on an award of \$14.50 per hour – I'm optimistic – something good is going to happen – in the meantime, I'll be enjoying the people and the passion....

⊕ Attract Workers

SELL HOLIDAYS

HOLI-ologist

EXPERTS in...

The science of making unforgettable holiday experiences

Sell Happiness

Appeal to

- ARTISTS →
- STORY TELLERS →
- MAGICIANS →
- COMEDIANS →
- ACTORS →
- PSYCHOLOGISTS →

PAINT THE PICTURE

KNOW THE real STORY

ACHIEVE HOLIDAY MAGIC; EXCEED EXPECTATIONS

... LAUGH; WIT, INTELLIGENCE, SKILL, FUN

THE CHALLENGE - ASSUME IDENTITIES TO BE YOUR BEST

LISTEN CARE SHARE. GENUINE INTEREST & SMILE.





TOURISM

TOURISM

active  
exciting  
quality  
fun  
memorable  
unique

TOURISM

TOURISM

TOURISM  
TOURISM  
taking off

TOURISM  
careers taking off

TOURISM

TOURISM

white on red.

TOURISM

TOURISM  
release the ...  
?  
release the explorer in you  
release the actor performer in you  
release the sport fan in you  
release the tour guide in you  
Share your passion  
"U" make the difference  
Landscapes facilities can't smile  
up up  
TOURISM CAREERS  
AUSTRALIA

CAREERS



TOURISM  
CAREERS  
check in ...

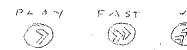
Brand Values  
quality people  
exceptional service  
satisfying careers  
exciting opportunities



TOURISM CAREERS  
GO . FAST . UP

PLAY FAST UP

TOURISM



TOURISM CAREERS  
AUSTRALIA

FUN  
EXCITING  
MOVING

TOURISM  
A2B  
...going places

"customers rely on you"

TOURISM  
unique people

TOURISM

we make the difference.

turn your dreams into reality

TOURISM

people travelling places

surprise your future

TOURISM  
CAREER EXPRESS

GO - Don't look back

TOURISM  
move the world

GO!  
TOURISM WORKERS  
AUSTRALIA

up up

TOURISM CAREERS  
AUSTRALIA

# ADVERTISING

create Tourism Brand



Benefit

we value you as you are.  
Be happy

6 U make Australia You-nique



Relate tourism to performing

> TOURISM careers >>

suggest fast track method to career.  
experienced + youth. talent ID



TOURISM careers

have potential experiences

... taking off

Quality Australia

Australian  
 TOURISM  
 a  
 6 STAR CAREERS