

Training Needs Assessment for the Hospitality Industry in Belize

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Introduction

About the Tourism Training Unit

The Tourism Training Unit is mandated to develop and carry out a range of planning, research and training tasks. In this regard some activity areas of the unit are as follows:

1. Assessment of training needs throughout the country at entry, staff and management training levels;
2. Development and implementation of training programs within the district to address the identified needs, using District Tourism Trainers;
3. Coordination and evaluation of on-going training throughout the country;
4. Coordination with product development efforts to ensure quality tourism products and services;
5. Liaison among the various departments of the public sector, non-governmental organizations and others involved in tourism training, strengthening BTIA's institutional linkages;
6. Development of national and district level standards and certifications for tourism skills, in coordination with other organizations involved in tourism development;
7. Increasing the profile of tourism in the country by providing sustainable, quality training in all districts.

In order to facilitate activity one (1), as stated above, a needs assessment was conducted to assess the training needs of the tourism industry in Belize. The main purpose of the analysis was to determine the best initial offering of courses for the Tourism Training Unit. This was accomplished by analyzing the current and future training needs of all sectors of the tourism industry. The assessment is based on a survey of 652 responding entities in the tourism industry.

Objectives of the Report

The objectives of the assessment were to:

- Inform the Tourism Training Unit of the current and projected priority training needs of the tourism industry in Belize.
- Guide the Unit as to what courses to prepare and provide to the industry.
- Provide direction and focus to existing tourism training institutions countrywide as to what courses should be offered.
- Provide rationale for cost-effective training in a concerted and organized manner.
- Allow industry owners to develop a plan of action for tourism training in their establishment.

Results

Overview

652 tourism establishments countrywide completed the needs assessment questionnaires. These establishments were either given a questionnaire at one of the presentations that the Unit made to the different tourism organizations, via email, fax or by individual visits from 15 interviewers who were hired to administer the survey. The questionnaires were divided into three sections. The first section looks at the institution, the second looks at the training needs and the third looks at the staff of the respondents. Sections one and two were mandatory but the third section was optional.

Besides the six districts, Placencia, Caye Caulker and San Pedro were included as separate destinations. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the number of questionnaires that were completed at the nine destinations throughout the country.

Table 1: Answers received by destination

Destination	Amount	Percent
Belize City	78	12.0
Caye Caulker	102	15.6
Cayo	65	10.0
Corozal	46	7.1
Orange Walk	16	2.5
Placencia	95	14.6
Punta Gorda	61	9.4
San Pedro	74	11.3
Stann Creek	115	17.6
Total	652	100.0

The Establishments

For the purposes of this assessment nine tourism types were used as a breakdown of the different sectors of the industry. Representatives from the Accommodation and Food and Beverage sectors completed almost 65% of the questionnaires with only .3% response from Tourism Education and Training centers. Table 2 shows the number of respondents from the all nine sectors.

Table 2: Type of Organisation

Organisation	Amount	Percent
Accommodation	268	41.1
Food and Beverage	154	23.6
Adventure Tourism	30	4.6
Transportation	50	7.7
Travel Trade	48	7.4
Events and Conferences	3	.5
Attractions	12	1.8
Tourism Services	11	1.7
Tourism Education and Training	2	.3
other	74	11.3
Total	652	100.0

In an effort to determine the age of tourism establishments in Belize and to see if there is correlation between the age of an operation and the training needs of that establishment the third question ask about the age of the establishment. Fifty-two percent of the responding organizations were five years or less and about 8% were over 21 years old. Table 3 shows the number of years that the establishments have been in existence. Please note that establishments under a year old are labeled as one year and all other responses are rounded up or down if over or below six months.

Table 3: Age of Operation

Years	Amount	Percent
0-5 years	322	51.6
6-10 years	150	24.0
11-15 years	65	10.4
16-20 years	45	7.2
21< years	42	6.7
Total	624	100.0

The respondents reported employing a total of 3,612 full-time and part-time workers. Table 4 shows the staff profile of the organizations interviewed. This profile includes the employment status and the sex breakdown of the respondents.

Table 4: Staff Profile

	Count	Percent
Staff by Category		
Managerial	836	23
Professional non-managerial	348	10
Skilled/semi-skilled	1517	42

Unskilled	911	25
Staff by full-time /part-time		
Full-time permanent	3135	87
Full-time temporary	133	4
Part-time	321	9
Staff by sex		
Male	1736	49
Female	1818	51

Table 5 details the type of training that is currently being used by the establishments that were interviewed. By far the most popular mode of training is on the job training. 86% of the respondents use this method to train their staff, 20% use in-house classroom training, 6% use the services of an external trainer, 13% sends their employees to local training institutions and only 5% use outside training institutions.

Table 5: Current Type of training

Type of Training	Amount	Percent
On the job	562	86
In-house classroom	128	20
Local tourism training institutions	88	14
External trainers	39	6
Regional tourism training institutions	18	3
International tourism training institutions	17	3

Table 6: Preferred time for training

Time of training	Amount	Percent
During the daytime	276	42
Evenings only	227	35
Weekends only	57	9
At other times	50	8

The most popular time for conducting training is during the daytime (42% of the respondents) with training on weekend (90%) as the least favorable. The breakdown of this can be seen on Table 6.

Table 7 shows preference for the different types of training. This table shows that almost 98% of the respondents stated that it is important to conduct on-the-job training. When asked about the percent of budget that is allocated to training, 63% indicated that they do not budget for training, 28% said they use 1-5% of their budget for training and 9% budgeted 5-10% for training.

Table 7: Importance of Training Type

	Important		Not important	
Type of Training	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
On the job	593	99	5	1
In-house classroom	411	86	67	14
External trainers	355	76	113	24
Local tourism training institutions	292	69	133	31
Regional tourism training institutions	265	63	155	37
International tourism training institutions	250	59	173	41

Training needs

The main purpose of this assessment was to determine tourism training needs as reported by the industry itself In order to do so, respondents were asked to indicate "all major training needs" among the various categories of staff. This section detail the major training needs identified by the responding organizations.

Tables 8, 9, 10, and 11 show the training needs identified at the Managerial, Professional, Skilled/semi-skilled and Unskilled levels. The first six courses at each level will be developed and offered over the first year of the project. At the Managerial level the courses are Customer Relations, Marketing, Leadership skills, Financial/Accounting, Communications and Human Resources Management. At the Professional level the courses are Customer Relations, Communications, Financial Accounting, a Foreign Language, Computer Skills and Marketing. At the Skilled/semi- skilled level the courses that will be developed are Customer Relations, Communications, Culinary Skills, Computer Literacy, Foreign Language and Financial Accounting. And at the Unskilled level the courses that will be developed are Customer Relations, Communications, House Keeping, Foreign Language, Waitering, and Culinary Skills. Across all four levels there were some common trends, the need for training in Customer Relations and Communications.

Table 8: Training Needs at the Managerial Level

Training Needs	Amount	Percent
Customer Relations	197	30
Marketing	156	24
Leadership	155	24
Financial/Accounting	121	19
Communications	120	18
Human Resource Management	97	15
Management	90	14
Computer Literacy	87	13
Foreign Language	72	11
Tour Guiding	36	6
Hospitality	21	3
Technical Skills	18	3
Product Knowledge	16	3
Fishing Skills	13	2
House Keeping	13	2
Catering	12	2
Marine Navigating	12	2
Waitering	11	2
First Aid	10	2

Table 9: Needs at the Professional Level

Training Needs	Amount	Percent
Customer Relations	119	18
Communications	93	14
Financial/Accounting	47	7
Computer Literacy	39	6
Marketing	39	6
Leadership	30	5
Technical Skills	20	3
Driving	18	3
Waitering	17	3
Hospitality	15	2

Table 10: Needs at the Skilled/Semi-Skilled Level

Training Needs	Amount	Percent
Customer Relations	180	28
Communications	125	19
Culinary Skills	76	12
Computer Literacy	58	9
Foreign Language	56	9
Financial/Accounting	38	6
Leadership Management	33	5
Marketing	31	5
Tour Guiding	31	5
Bar Tending	23	4
Waitering	13	2
Technical Skills	13	2
Marine Navigation	12	2
Driving	11	2

Table 11: Training Needs at the Unskilled Level

Training Needs	Amount	Percent	Training Needs	Amount	Percent
Customer Relations	130	20	Computer Literacy	18	3
Communications	106	16	Financial/Accounting	17	3
House Keeping	41	6	Bar Tending	16	3
Foreign Language	37	6	Hospitality	15	2
Waitering	31	5	Landscape Upkeep	14	2
Culinary Skills	25	4	Driving	12	2
Leadership	25	4	Diving	11	2
Tour Guiding	20	3	Maintenance	11	2
Human Resource Management	19	3	Technical Skills	10	2
Marketing	19	3	Swimming Pool Operation	9	2

Other Analysis

When looking at the type of training that is currently being undertaken by the various sectors of tourism operation, “On the job training” is used the most across all sectors. In the accommodation sector, 90% use on the job training, 18% use in-house classroom training, 7% use external trainers, 14% use local tourism training institutions, 3% use regional tourism training institutions, and 3% uses international tourism training institutions. This trend was similar across the different sectors of tourism operations. Table 12 shows the breakdown.

Table 12: Type of Training used by different sectors of Tourism Operations (percent)

Type	On the job	In-house classroom	External trainers	Local institutions	Regional institutions	International institutions
Accommodation	90	18	7	14	3	3
Food and Beverage	94	18	1	4	1	0
Adventure Tourism	86	27	3	33	7	3
Transportation	88	16	8	20	0	4
Travel Trade	73	23	10	40	8	10
Events and Conferences	68	0	33	0	0	0
Attractions	75	25	8	8	0	0
Tourism Services	73	27	18	9	0	0
Education and Training	50	0	0	0	0	50

When a cross tabulation was run to determine the preferred training time by the type of tourism operations there was no difference across the nine sectors in their preference for daytime training during the week with training during the evening hours following closely. Training on the weekends seems to be the least attraction of the three options. Table 13 provides the detail.

Table 13: Training Time used by Types of Operations (percent)

Type	Daytime	Evening	Weekends
Accommodation	41	36	8
Food and Beverage	43	31	10
Adventure Tourism	43	37	3
Transportation	42	40	4
Travel Trade	58	38	4
Events and Conferences	0	100	0
Attractions	50	36	17
Tourism Services	36	50	18
Education and Training	0	34	0

Table 14 provides a detailed breakdown of the training needs across the tune sectors of tourism. This information will guide the Unit to target its marketing efforts to the right sector. For example, the table shows that 249 people from the accommodation sector would like training in Customer Relations and from this number, 77 are from the managerial level, 45 from the professional level, 70 from the semi-skilled level and 57 from the unskilled. This breakdown can be shown for all the training needs across every sector.



Table 15 shows the training needs of the nine destinations. This information will be provided to the District Tourism Trainers who will use this to know whom to approach for training.



Conclusion

The results of the needs assessment study suggest several potential areas of emphasis for tourism training. The nine most desired programs that the industry is calling for are customer relations, marketing, leadership, financia/accounting, communications, human resources management, management, computer literacy and foreign language. These programs ranked the highest across the nine sectors of tourism and across the four levels of employment.

Most responses came from the Stann Creek District (17.6% of the total amount) and the least from Corozal (7.1%). The accommodation sector of tourism had the most responses (41.1%) and the Tourism Education and Training Institutions had the least (.3%). Of the establishments that participated in the survey 86% currently conduct on the job training and 99% stated that this type of training is important. The least used type of training is the sending of employees to international training institutions (3%). During the daytime is the preferred time for training with the weekends being least preferred.

