Staff Induction, Training and Professional Development

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1.0 The Importance of Training and Development

Training and development is a crucial part of the human resource development in an organisation. It is fruitful to employers, employees and volunteers of an organisation as employees and volunteers become more efficient and productive when trained well.

As well as contributing to the profitability of the VIC, it is also necessary for the individual development and progress of the employee or volunteer. Other benefits gained by organisations with a healthy training culture include:
- improved job satisfaction and staff morale and reduced absenteeism and employee turnover
- less supervision required with well trained employees
- fewer accidents and errors by staff which reduces time and monetary costs to the organisation

When planning VIC staff training and development it is important to recognise the roles and expectations of volunteers compared to paid staff, and factor any differences into the training and development plan.

2.0 Links Between VIC Staff Positions, Tasks and Appropriate Skills

The table below provides a brief overview of the types of tasks performed by various VIC staff positions and the skills required for these positions. Although position titles vary slightly between VICs, a number of skills and tasks are common to these positions and it is reasonable to assume these are a fair representation of industry expectations across Queensland.

This table will assist in preparing position descriptions for VIC staff (paid and volunteers).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre Manager</td>
<td>o ensure the Business Plan and Operations Manual are current</td>
<td>o highly developed organisational, managerial, interpersonal and leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o ensure VIC operates as efficiently and cost effectively as possible (preferably on a self-funding basis), achieving all standards and targets</td>
<td>o excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o develop and pursue policies, activities and operations consistent with the goals and resources of the centre and the centre’s funding agencies</td>
<td>o ability to establish and expand industry networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o oversee recruitment, training and supervision of VIC staff</td>
<td>o proven experience in handling the media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o apply for relevant government funds</td>
<td>o proven performance in developing and maintaining co-operative working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o maintain a close relationship with the local and regional tourist association and industry</td>
<td>o relevant tertiary qualifications in tourism, accounting or related discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o develop good working relationships with community and business groups</td>
<td>o understanding of tourism information distribution techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o promote the VIC to media, government and industry</td>
<td>o understanding of tourism context in which the VIC operates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o establish sound accounting procedures and statistical information collection techniques</td>
<td>o experience in the tourism industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o produce monthly reports</td>
<td>o experience with office based software, eg. Power point, Word, Access, Excel, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o represent the VIC at board and/or management committee meetings</td>
<td>o experienced and knowledgeable on how to capitalise on social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Co-ordinator / Supervisor| o manage the day-to-day operation and budgetary performance of the centre  
o ensure all visitors to the VIC are serviced with pride, professionalism and efficiency  
o maintain a strong relationship between paid staff and volunteers  
o recruit, train, support, co-ordinate, supervise and review performance of all staff (paid and volunteer)  
o ensure VIC is attractively and informatively presented  
o ensure established procedures are adhered to  
o monitor visitation trends to VIC  
o prepare and distribute calendar of events  
o set up tourism displays and roster staff at events  
o co-ordinate and attend trade shows  
o operate electronic booking service  
o initiate and conduct regular familiarisations of regional destinations and products  
o co-ordinate and supervise banking and booking processes  
o maintain accurate financial records of booking and commission payments  
o ensure on-going compilation of records relevant to the VIC  
o develop and maintain volunteer rosters  
o maintain the Communications Book  
o oversee maintenance of VIC  
o actively encourage new members and support existing members | o demonstrated leadership abilities  
o excellent oral and written communication, organisational, interpersonal and presentation skills  
o proven performance in developing and maintaining cooperative working relationships  
o experience in working with volunteer programs, tourism and community groups  
o excellent customer service skills  
o understanding of tourism information distribution techniques  
o ability to display and present information in an attractive and productive manner  
o excellent knowledge of local tourism products and operators or ability to develop same  
o ability to understand, source and promote tourism products  
o excellent sales skills with proven ability to convert sales  
o ability to co-ordinate staffing, and proven experience in sourcing and delivering staff induction and training programs  
o identify and put in place improved administrative systems  
o ability to liaise with tourism members and organise familiarisations  
o ability to monitor visitation and other tourism trends  
o an effective, empathetic listener  
o developed conflict resolution skills  
o understanding of budget process or ability to develop same quickly  
o experience with office based software, eg. Power point, Word, Access, Excel, etc.  
o Understanding of digital marketing including social media  
o committed approach to teamwork principles  
o experience in the tourism industry (desirable) |
| Information Officer      | o provide information and advice on, and promote, products and services within the region  
o present visitor information in a stimulating and organised manner  
o process telephone, mail, fax and email enquiries  
o enter enquiries into database  
o daily and weekly maintenance of members’ brochure supplies in the VIC  
o operate cash register, EFTPOS facility, credit card payments and booking service  
o monitor visitation to the centre and trends in information sought  
o identify gaps in information provision  
o participate in product familiarisations  
|                        | o attend product and service presentations  
o assist with tourism marketing projects  
o foster and contribute to a team approach | o ability to understand, source and promote tourism products  
o a good knowledge of the region, including local products and operators  
o understanding of tourism information distribution techniques and flair for the presentation of printed tourist information  
o ability to display and present information  
o excellent customer service skills  
o excellent sales skills with proven ability to convert sales  
o well-developed oral and written communication, organisational and presentation skills  
o ability to communicate with different cultures and/or languages  
o ability to monitor visitation and other tourism trends  
o experience with office based software, eg. Power point, Word, Access, Excel, etc.  
o outgoing, friendly personality and a positive attitude  
o committed approach to teamwork principles  
o a desire to learn and improve oneself  
o experience in tourism industry (desirable) |
Position Description Template

Clear, written job descriptions define tasks and responsibilities and establish staff expectations. They also provide valuable information for job applicants during the recruitment process. It is therefore highly recommended that VICs prepare a position description for all positions within their centre.

The following is an example of a typical Position Description:

1. Position identification
   - position title
   - employment type (for example, Permanent, Full-time, Part-time, Casual, Volunteer, Contract)

2. Position objectives
   - a succinct statement of the key objectives of the position

3. Key responsibilities and duties
   - a summary of all responsibilities undertaken by the staff member

4. Organisational relationships
   - to whom the position reports, and who reports to them

5. Accountability and extent of authority
   - clear guidelines as to the boundaries of authority and accountability in the position, including budgetary authority
6. **Key Selection Criteria**
   - specialist skills and knowledge
   - management skills
   - interpersonal skills
   - qualifications and experience

Refer to Section M: Templates for a sample Position Description template.

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### 4.0 Staff and Volunteer Induction

Induction is the process of introducing new personnel (employees or volunteers) to the organisation, to their supervisors and co-workers and to their jobs. After you have completed the necessary paperwork, you may want to concentrate on bringing your employee or volunteer into your organisation by arranging an induction.

The following should be included in an induction program:
- a review of the job description with the new personnel, so he or she knows what the specific duties will be (although they should have a general idea from the initial interview)
- discussion of what the business does and what the organisation goals are
- an overview of the performance review procedures
- how the person’s role fits into the overall picture
- basic work rules
- compensation and benefits
- a tour of the workplace

### 4.1 Staff Induction Process

The following diagram provides an example of the induction process of a new employee or volunteer. To ensure continuity in the induction process it may be helpful to develop an **induction checklist** for each new staff member.

Refer to Section M: Templates for an example of an Induction Checklist.

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**The flow of events:**

- New employee/volunteer appointed
- Introductions
- Site tour and familiarisations
- Formal orientation
- Orientation to work area
- Start tasks
- Supervision and feedback

**Potential Checklist items:**

- Contract signed
- Select person to undertake orientation
- Introduce other Personnel
- Orientation to the centre
- Special equipment
- Work area
- Safety features
- Organisational overview
- Philosophy, mission
- Business Plan
- Operations Manual
- Workplace Health and Safety requirements
- Key contact numbers
- Name badge
- Staff amenities
- Standard of dress
- Safety and emergency procedures
- Customer service policy
- Provide reading/background materials
- Probationary period

*Limes Hotel, Brisbane*
4.2 Volunteer and Employee Agreements
It is recommended that VICs formalise their induction process through the development of an agreement for volunteers and employees. The agreement should serve to outline the role, start date and expected commitment of the volunteer or employee to the VIC and vice versa. 
Refer to the Annual Commitment Agreement example in Section M: Templates.

4.3 Confidentiality Agreement
As part of the staff induction process it is also recommended that VICs develop a confidentiality agreement for volunteers and employed staff to sign. The purpose of such a document would be to clarify the information that can and cannot be disclosed by personnel of the VIC.

5.0 Staff Training Process
Through the normal operation of the VIC (and as a result of business planning) gaps will be identified in staff and volunteer skills and knowledge and training may be required.

The following diagram illustrates the process by which training needs are identified and actioned:

Staff Training Process:

- Skill or knowledge gap
- Identify staff who need training
- Internal resources available?
  - YES
    - Schedule training, allocate resources
    - Is the training part of normal induction or on-the-job training?
      - YES
        - Commence training, advise other staff involved in the process
      - NO
        - Develop and implement training
  - NO
    - Identify potential training providers, source course information
    - Determine appropriate courses
    - Consider external training adviser
    - Arrange training, roster staff to attend
- Add certificate or proof of attendance to staff file
6.0 What Training Does My Centre Staff and I Need?

In Queensland, most VICs conduct their own internal training programs, such as basic induction training, and identify other areas of interest or need as required.

Training needs may include:
- customer service (including face to face, telephone and electronic / email)
- computer training (including use of office based computer programs, social media and programs specifically used by the VIC)
- induction, management and training of staff and volunteers
- regular industry familiarisation events
- staff team building exercises
- interpretive presentation
- travel agents training
- marketing, communications and public relations skills
- specific visitor information services training
- first aid for selected staff
- online booking system

Generally, each VIC develops its own preferred training which will be influenced by such factors as:
- the VIC’s size, location and access to resources
- costs and time constraints associated with external training
- the willingness and availability of staff to participate in training programs (e.g. volunteers)

7.0 What Qualifications Exist for VIC Staff?

The table below provides examples of the types of training courses and qualifications, relevant to VIC staff. People who have gained the skill and knowledge through experience can obtain these qualifications with little or no further study, by applying for Recognition of Prior Learning (for more information, see 8.0 Options for training below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Recommended Qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Information Assistant | Components of Certificate II in Tourism (Sales/Office Operations), as follows:  
  - work with colleagues and Customers  
  - work in a Socially Diverse Environment  
  - follow Health, Safety and Security Procedures  
  - communicate on the Telephone  
  - perform clerical procedures  
  - process financial transactions  
  - develop and Update Local Knowledge  
  This partial achievement of a national qualification reflects the very defined customer service role played by information assistants, especially those working on a voluntary basis. |
| Information Officer | Certificate III in Tourism (Visitor Information Services) |
| Information Centre Supervisor/Manager/Tourist Officer | Certificate IV in Tourism (Team Leading) or a Certificate IV in Tourism (Sales and Marketing) |
| Tourism Manager, Visitor Information Centre Manager | Diploma of Tourism (Marketing and Product Development or Operations Management) |
| Volunteer | Certificate I, II, III, in Active Volunteering or a Certificate IV in Volunteer Program Coordination.  
For more information contact Volunteering Queensland on phone: 3002 7600 or visit their website at www.volunteeringqld.org.au |
8.0 Options for Training

Depending on your reasons for training, the type of training your staff needs, and the resources available to you, there are a number of training options available.

When planning training for your staff or volunteers, consider each individual and the demographics of your group and keep in mind that everyone has a different learning style. By getting to know the best approach for the group or individual you can then choose the most effective training option.

Training can occur on-site (provided by you, the employer) in the form of induction, mentoring and on-the-job training. Training can also be provided on-site or off-site by registered training organisations.

The process of recognising skills or knowledge involves an assessment by a registered training organisation to see if a person’s skills and experience meet current industry standards. It will be these organisations that issue the qualification.

**Recognition of prior leaning** is formal recognition of skills and knowledge that a person holds, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred. A person’s experience may have been gained in a number of ways, for example through:
- formal or informal training and education
- work experience
- general life experience

8.1 Training Providers

**A registered training organisation** is a training organisation registered in accordance with the Australian Quality Training Framework, to provide training or assessment products and services and issue qualifications and statements of attainments. Any private or public organisation can become a registered training organisation including for example, group training organisations, TAFE colleges, private providers, employers, schools, and adult and community education providers.

8.1.1 Private Providers

Private training providers refer to those businesses and organisations that also offer training and are not part of the TAFE Queensland system. Private providers can offer both recognised training and non-recognised training.

8.1.2 Volunteering Queensland

Volunteering Queensland (VQ) focuses specifically on the needs of volunteers in the workplace, assisting them with skills development and the raising of professional standards. Operating in a consultancy capacity, VQ generally develops and delivers training components relevant to an individual VIC’s identified requirements.

VQ also has a volunteer management program which has received regular interest from Queensland VIC managers.

For further information contact Volunteering Queensland:
Telephone: (07) 3002 7600
Email: admin@volunteeringqld.org.au
Website: www.volunteeringqld.org.au

8.1.3 Technical and Further Education (TAFE)

With a network of 13 institutes, over 70 campuses and about 800 programs, TAFE Queensland is the largest, most experienced training provider. TAFE delivers world class vocational education, training and adult learning in Queensland and the qualifications gained are recognised across Australia and respected worldwide.
TAFE programs are developed in conjunction with industry and employers to ensure that the skills being emphasised reflect the latest industry developments.

Visit their website, www.tafe.qld.gov.au to find a TAFE near you and the courses on offer, or contact the customer service hotline on 1300 308 233.

8.1.4 QTIC Skills Link
QTIC Skills Link is contracted by the Queensland Government as an industry skills body to assist in driving workforce development, skills reform and training investment for Queensland.

QTIC Skills Link assists industry to achieve workforce development-related outcomes by:
- providing education and training-related policy advice;
- providing training delivery and implementation advice;
- designing, implementing and managing workforce development and employment-related initiatives and projects; and
- contributing to the development of industry training packages, learning products and resources.

For more information on how QTIC Skills Link can assist you:
Telephone: (07) 3236 1445
Email: info@qtic.com.au
Web: www.qtic.com.au

8.1.5 Other Training Options
Other organisations may also provide training on a number of different topics such as customer service and business management.

Some of these include:
- Regional Tourism Organisations and Tourism and Events Queensland – provide advice, seminars and professional development opportunities
- the Employing People, Skills Development & Training section of www.business.gov.au
- the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) with Australian Business Training Solutions
- the Department of Education, Training & Employment

9.0 On-going Professional Development
It is important that VIC staff be given the opportunity to undertake professional development activities on a regular basis to improve service quality and retain employees. On-going professional development also helps prepare employees for advancement to new roles or positions, and for changes in the VIC’s technology or the services it offers.

Professional development activities may include:
- face to face education/training in tourism and related disciplines
- distance education/training in tourism and related disciplines
- participation in industry committees and associations
- attendance at conferences related to tourism
- presentations at industry or related forums
- acting as a mentor to less experienced industry colleagues
- providing guidance regarding on-the-job training
- helping people use the industry training materials that are available.
- collaborating with other centres in your region

Collaborating with other visitor information centres in your surrounding area and region offers a number of benefits, including:
- increased awareness of tourism products and services available
- opportunity to share ideas and discuss common problems
- allowing staff and volunteers to learn through interaction with others in similar roles
- opportunity to undertake collaborative delivery of training
- opportunity to undertake collaborative development or marketing projects