

IMPROVING THE YIELD OF TOURISM IN REGIONAL AREAS

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES



By Dean Carson, Kim Adams, Margaret Deery, Leo Jago and Sean Daugherty

SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM



CRC

TECHNICAL REPORTS

The technical report series present data and its analysis, meta-studies and conceptual studies and are considered to be of value to industry, government and researchers. Unlike the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre's Monograph series, these reports have not been subjected to an external peer review process. As such, the scientific accuracy and merit of the research reported here is the responsibility of the authors, who should be contacted for clarifications of any content. Author contact details are at the back of this report.

EDITORS

Prof Chris Cooper
Prof Terry De Lacy
Prof Leo Jago

University of Queensland
Sustainable Tourism CRC
Sustainable Tourism CRC

Editor-in-Chief
Chief Executive
Director of Research

National Library of Australia Cataloguing in Publication Data

Improving the yield of tourism in regional areas: knowledge management within visitor information centres.

Bibliography.
ISBN 1 920704 70 1.

1. Tourist information centres - Australia. 2. Tourism - Customer services. I. Carson, Dean Bradley. II. Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism.

338.479194

Copyright © CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd 2005

All rights reserved. Apart from fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review as permitted under the *Copyright Act*, no part of this book may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the publisher. Any enquiries should be directed to Brad Cox, Communications Manager (brad@crctourism.com.au) or Trish O'Connor, Publishing Manager (trish@crctourism.com.au).

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	IV
SUMMARY	V
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	2
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT	2
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	5
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	5
Assessment Instrument	5
CHAPTER 4 QUALITATIVE RESULTS	8
LEADERSHIP	8
CULTURE	8
INFRASTRUCTURE	9
TECHNOLOGY	9
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	9
CHAPTER 5 QUALITATIVE IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION	10
APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTION BOOK TOURIST OBSERVATIONS VIC MAPPING	11
APPENDIX B: INFORMATION BOOK FOR STAFF INTERVIEWS	16
REFERENCES	22
AUTHORS	25

List of Tables

Table 1: Knowledge structures	2
Table 2: The SKM assessment instrument	6

List of Figures

Figure 1: A knowledge strategy framework	5
--	---

Abstract

A case study was conducted of a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) as part of the improving yield project. This research identified that recognition of the external environment was a significant enabler of strategic knowledge management in the VIC studied. The research also demonstrated that the principles of Strategic Knowledge Management, as encapsulated in the assessment instrument, were relevant and important. The value of learning for management and staff was highlighted, together with some of the ways in which visitor information centres may promote it. The assessment instrument provides a general benchmarking tool for visitor information centres to identify their capacity for organisational learning and knowledge management. Future research may be focused on implementation of the instrument across a number of visitor information centres to ascertain the degree to which different structures (including funding, operations, management, and accreditation) are associated with different knowledge management strategies.

Acknowledgements

The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, an Australian Government initiative, funded this research.

The authors wish to acknowledge the participation and assistance with this research project of a number of people within the Visitor Information Centre network. In particular, we would like to thank:

Margaret Baker – Coordinator of the Yarra Valley Visitor Information Centre

David Chalwell – Owner Manager, Bright Visitor Information Centre

Karen Doyle – Tourism Information Officer, Mildura Visitor Information Centre

Kate Eltringham – Manager, Bendigo Visitor Information Centre

Cassondre Ford – Staff, Bright Visitor Information Centre

Bindi Gove – Industry & Business Development Manager, Country Victoria Tourism Council

Kristine Harrington – Manager, Mildura Visitor Information Centre

Susan Hawton – Officer in Charge (Manager), Bairnsdale Visitor Information Centre

Jenny Hibell – Apollo Bay Visitor Information Centre

Helen Leech – Tourist Officer, Hall's Gap Visitor Information Centre

Angie Lush – Tourism Services Manager, Northern Grampian Shire

Kelly Miller – Manager, Apollo Bay Visitor Information Centre

Maureen Newcomen – Volunteer, Bairnsdale Visitor Information Centre

Emma Orgill – Information Officer, Bairnsdale Visitor Information Centre

Sharon Raguse – Manager Visitor Services, Bendigo Visitor Information Centre

Sandra Smith – Paid Staff Healesville Visitor Information Centre

SUMMARY

Objective Of Study

As part of the project 'Improving the yield of tourism in regional areas: the role of visitor information centres', this report developed a tool for assessing the management of knowledge within a Visitor Information Centre. This report deals with two types of knowledge: Strategic Knowledge Management and Knowledge Management. Strategic knowledge management (SKM) represents the attempt by organisations to improve their overall capacity for knowledge. Knowledge Management (KM) is a multidisciplinary approach to achieving organisational objectives by making the best use of knowledge.

Methodology

A case study was conducted in which the assessment instrument was applied. This was conducted at the Echo Point Visitor Information Centre, which forms part of the Blue Mountains Tourism Authority (BMTA) in New South Wales. The case study included analysis of documentation provided by the VIC and key stakeholders (including annual reports, business plans, position descriptions etc.) and interviews with stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with:

- Regional Tourism Organisation Manager and Marketing Manager
- Visitor Information Centre Manager
- Staff members of the VIC
- The VICs Telephone Enquiry Centre Staff

The interviews were semi-structured and explored the checklist items from the Strategic Knowledge Management Assessment Instrument.

Findings

The findings suggest that there are substantial constraints on the capacity for VICs to develop and implement a strategic knowledge management agenda internally. These constraints largely emerge from the complexity of the environment in which VICs operate. The management agenda is heavily influenced by the expectations and practices of external stakeholders, funding agents and other peripheral organisations.

Future Action

The existing SKM Framework (Andrews 2002; Trussler 1998) does not adequately account for the influence of external organisations, therefore the assessment tool requires revision. From the Framework it is expected that leadership and organisational culture emerge from within the organisation, and that decisions on the key policy infrastructure are also internally driven. The checklist focuses on internal management, however, it will need to include items describing the relationship between the organisation and its external environments. In particular, these items should reflect the extent to which those external organisations that directly influence the VIC management agenda accept the principles of knowledge management.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the key aims of Visitor Information Centres (VIC) is to provide knowledge to visitors, although there is little standardisation of the ways and means of providing this information (Burns & Murphy 1998). Further to this, various writers such as Moscardo (1993; 1998; 1999), Pearce (1991) and Pennington-Gray and Vogt (2003) suggest that there are other key functions of VICs. These include marketing an area and then promoting access to this area; enhancing the visitor experience through the provision of information on the area; controlling and filtering the number of visitors to reduce visitor pressures on resources, and providing an actual substitute for the visitor experience. For example, many VICs have displays and interpretive centres associated with them that become an attraction in their own right.

To achieve these aims, a literature review was undertaken to identify existing research in knowledge management practices and the roles and functions of VICs and the environment in which they operate. Subsequently, utilising a tailored Knowledge Strategy Framework (Andrews 2002), a case study identified key success factors and components of VICs. This was achieved through the analysis of documentation and interviews with VICs and key stakeholders. The results from this analysis were used to determine strategic methods of managing knowledge within VICs.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) can be thought of as a multidisciplinary approach to achieving organisational objectives by making the best use of knowledge.

‘Knowledge management focuses on processes such as sharing, acquiring and creating knowledge and the cultural and technical foundations that support them. Its goal is to align knowledge processes with organisational objectives’ (Andrews 2002, p.1).

Much of the knowledge management literature has focused on the practice of knowledge management and, in particular, the use of information and communication technologies to facilitate knowledge management (Beckman 1999). It has become clear that organisations may take a variety of approaches to implementing knowledge management, and that various approaches may be more or less successful in different kinds of organisations (Liebowitz & Beckman 1998). Sveiby (2001) suggests that a knowledge strategy requires a systematic assessment of the internal and external networks of an organisation. He further acknowledges that this process can be achieved by addressing a number of strategic questions to determine the organisations knowledge structures, and therefore enable the development of a coordinated strategy.

Table 1: Knowledge structures

Knowledge Structures	Strategic Questions to be addressed
Between individuals	How can we improve the transfer of competence between people in our organisation?
From individuals to external structures	How can the organisation’s employees improve the competence of customers, suppliers and other stakeholders?
From external structures to individuals	How can the organisation’s customers, suppliers and other stakeholders improve the competence of the employees?
From individual competence to internal structure	How can we improve the conversion of individually held competence to systems, tools and templates?
From internal structure to individual competence	How can we improve individuals’ competence by using systems, tools and templates?
Within the external structure	How can we enable the conversations among the customers, suppliers and other stakeholders so they improve their competence?
From external to internal structure	How can competence from the customers, suppliers and other stakeholders improve the organisation’s systems, tools and processes and products?
From internal to external structure	How can the organisation’s systems, tools and processes and products improve the competence of the customers, suppliers and other stakeholders?
Within the internal structure	How can the organisation’s systems, tools and processes and products be effectively integrated?

(Sveiby 2001, p.346-347)

Underlying the implementation of specific practices, however, is the capacity of organisations to implement a strategic knowledge management agenda. Strategic knowledge management (SKM) represents the attempt by organisations to improve their overall capacity for knowledge. The literature suggests that this capacity may be dependent on: leadership; culture; infrastructure; technology; and an acceptance of the need for continuous improvement (Andrews 2002).

Leadership sets the context and direction for the organisation’s SKM initiatives (Andrews 2002). The remaining four elements (culture, infrastructure, technology and continuous improvement) address the people, process and technology issues. Organisations which understand their performance against the five elements are likely to be better placed to implement structured and cohesive SKM practices. This research was concerned

with the capacity for Visitor Information Centres (VICs) to manipulate the five critical elements of SKM to assist them in improved performance. The research is not an analysis of the nature of knowledge management in VICs, but of the influences on VICs' capacity to implement a SKM agenda.

The distribution of tourism product is an information intensive activity. Visitor information centres and other visitor services agencies must be particularly aware of the need to collect, collate, store, and provide information efficiently and effectively. There has been surprisingly little research into VICs in Australia given their prominent role particularly at a local level (Dredge 2001).

The research to date has been concentrated in three main areas. A number of studies have been carried out at the general structural level, including Dredge's (2001) work which analysed the historical development of local government involvement in tourism. Carson, Beattie and Gove (2002) appraised the structures of local government in terms of their role in sustainable tourism management, while Jenkins (2000) and Tonge, Myott and Enright (1995) investigated the relationships between local government and regional tourism organisations.

Research examining personnel issues include McKercher and Ritchie (1996; 1997) on the profile of local government tourism managers. These studies identified the local government tourism environment as highly volatile, typified by high staff turnover and low levels of formal qualifications. In a similar vein, Tait, Richins and Hanlon (1993), conducted a study on the management training knowledge and skill priorities of sport, recreation and tourism managers.

A small body of research has examined the various products and services offered by VICs. This body of knowledge includes two consultancies carried out in New South Wales and Queensland which looked at the services that VICs offered, and the effect on subsequent traveller decisions (TSDS & Kerridge 1998; Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation 1999). Hobbins (1999) analysed the impact of VIC's on traveller decisions and expenditure, while the Fallon and Kriwoken (2002) evaluative report on the Strahan VIC, Tasmania, looked at its use to determine the effectiveness and sustainability of future VIC developments. To date, there has been no research on the ability of VICs to deliver timely and useful information and knowledge to its customers.

As the literature suggests, VICs may operate under a number of management models, the most common of which is direct investment by local government, or by local and state government through regional tourism organisations (RTOs). Jenkins (2000) suggested that the reduced role of central government in economic development strategies has been a major factor in the creation of the new economic and entrepreneurial roles for local governments. Tourism has become an area where local government has invested, and visitor information centres are one manifestation of that investment (Carson et al. 2002). While VICs may have a variety of functions, their core role is to provide information about local tourism products and services to visitors in the destination.

The New South Wales tourism strategy claimed that VICs boosted visitor spending by \$57 million a year through encouraging people to stay longer and visit more attractions (Aurora 1998). This mirrors substantial research carried out in the United States, which suggested that such centres have a positive influence on tourist length of stay and expenditures (Tierney 1993; Fesenmaier & Vogt 1993) and travel behaviour (Fesenmaier, Vogt & Stewart 1993). Similar findings have been published in Australia by Hobbins (1999). Therefore, the continued development of tourism as an economic generator in regional Australia has some dependency on VICs and their expertise in imparting information to tourists.

VICs perform their information provision roles through a complex set of relationships with: tourism businesses; public sector agencies; industry associations; travel agencies and other intermediaries; visitor groups and individual visitors. Information which emerges from these relationships may be highly codified (making it relatively easy to distribute), or tacit. It may be relevant to a wide range of audiences, or specific to a smaller range. It may come from a single source, or may represent an accumulation of data from many sources. Even within a visitor information centre, information may have been transmitted to all personnel, or to only some staff. The information which is ultimately provided to visitors emerges from a complex process of iterative learning (Malmberg & Maskell 1997). Information provision – content, placement, method of delivery and so on – is determined both by what the VIC knows about the products and services they promote and the information seekers.

Programs, processes and technologies have been developed to assist VICs in performing their information distribution functions. Nationally, these include: accreditation schemes; support networks; and information and communication technologies, including online technologies. In New South Wales, VICs achieve accreditation through a Visitor Information Network (VIN), which was set up by the Council of Tourism Associations (CTA) in 1999 to enhance and strengthen communications between VICs and tourist operators, and provide a focal point for industry networking, marketing and professional development (Aurora 1998). In 2001 Aurora Practical Solutions was appointed by Tourism NSW to further develop the NSW Accredited Visitor Information Network, and in 2003 was successful in bringing NSW into line with national standards. The national network exists to ensure the delivery of a high standard of service in the provision of reliable and readily accessible information to visitors, residents and the travelling public. It has developed a framework for professional management and operation of VICs nationwide, together with strong brand recognition and a demonstrable commitment to

attracting visitors to regional Australia (G. Gerrity 2003, pers. comm., 26 August).

The environment in which VICs operate is additionally influenced by funding arrangements and structures. There is no one universal set of arrangements, with VICs attracting various proportions of their income from: local government grants; regional tourism organisation funding; operator subscriptions; commissions on bookings; and sales of souvenirs, maps, guides and so on. Few VICs operate entirely free of public sector funding, and most have management boards or committees with representation from private and public sectors. VICs therefore, not only provide a conduit for information from tourism organisations to visitors, but have a range of reporting responsibilities tied to accreditation, funding, and the Visitor Information Network.

The development of state and national accreditation standards, and a drive from key funding agents to have these standards adopted has led to increasing focus not only on the roles and responsibilities of VICs, but on how they organise themselves in regards to those roles and responsibilities. While the literature in this area has yet to adopt the language of knowledge management, it seems reasonable that the principles of knowledge management are particularly apt for VICs. Knowledge management is concerned with the maintenance of knowledge capital within an organisation or network of organisations (Beckman 1999). Knowledge comes to be as a result of the processing of data and information. While many organisations are increasingly reliant on sharing knowledge internally and with external stakeholders, the diversity, geographical dispersion, and interrelationships of tourism organisations (Leiper 1995) and the fact that information is a key component of the tourism product itself (Sheldon 1997) suggests that tourism should benefit from improved knowledge management practices. Within the tourism systems, VICs engage in information intensive activities and may particularly benefit through employing knowledge management.

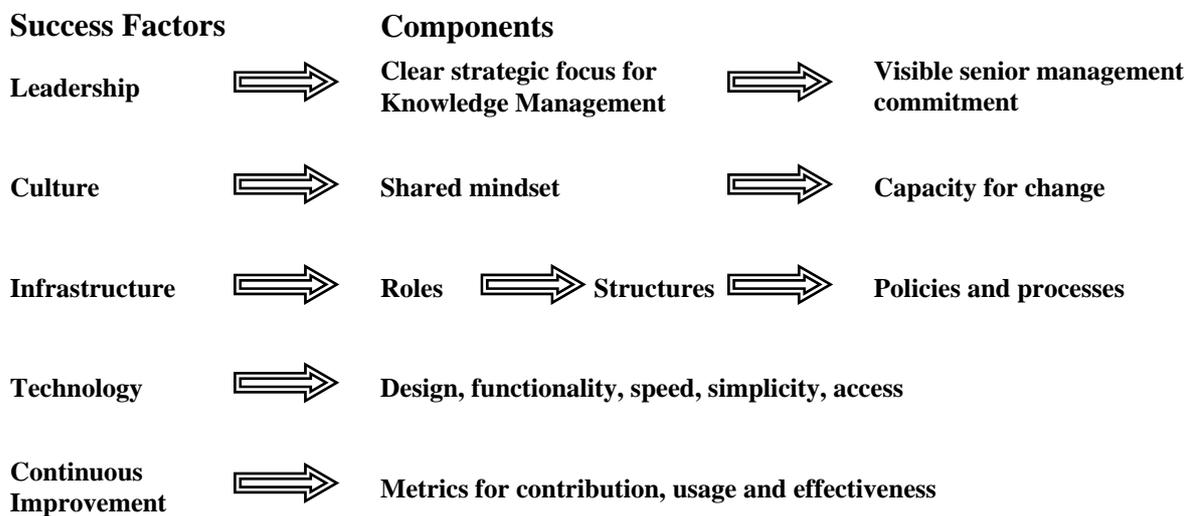
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Conceptual Framework

Trussler (1998; cited in Andrews 2002), and later Andrews (2002) developed a knowledge strategy framework, which attempted to define the aspects of organisations which could be manipulated to enhance knowledge management capacity. Figure 1 depicts the framework. The framework identifies the five key components of successful knowledge management (the ‘success factors’), and the organisational considerations (‘components’) for realising these success factors. The Trussler/ Andrews model has been accepted as a starting point for the purposes of this research. Assessing the status of an organisation in relation to the Trussler/ Andrews model requires an operationalisation of Figure 1.

Figure 1: A knowledge strategy framework



Andrews (2002) – Adapted from Trusler (1998)

Assessment Instrument

A number of researchers have focused on various aspects relating to the knowledge strategy framework in Figure 1, and a general guide to assessing SKM may be developed from this literature. The guide takes the form of a series of checklist items. These items provide qualitative views on the extent to which an organisation is able to address its knowledge structures. Table 2 summarises the SKM Assessment Instrument. It is important to recognise that the instrument at this level is a generic one, and may be applied to any organisation. The case study conducted for this research will allow the instrument to be tailored more specifically for VICs.

Table 2: The SKM assessment instrument

Success Factors and Components	Themes covered in checklist
LEADERSHIP	
Clear strategic focus for KM	Strategic management - Hubbard (2000). Knowledge as a critical factor in organisational competitiveness - Andrews (2002), Bollinger and Smith (2001), Sveiby (2001), Tissen, Andriessen and Lekanne Depez (2000) and Zack (1999).
Visible Senior management commitment	Management commitment to strategic processes and communication to stakeholders - Andrews (2002), Bryman (1991), Carlopio, Andrewartha and Armstrong (2001), Sarros and Butchatsky (1998), Tissen et al. (2000) and Wigg (1999).
CULTURE	
Shared mindset	Collectively held and sanctioned definitions such as philosophies, values, beliefs, work systems and practices - Desimone, Werner and Harris (2002), Dolan and Garcia (2002), Gabriel (1999), Hubbard (2000), Nankervis Compton and McCarthy (1999), Ogbonna and Harris (2002), Schein (1994) and Trompenaars (1993). Continuous learning culture - Hall (2001), McDermott and O'Dell (2001), Senge (1990) and Tissen et al. (2000),.
Staff capabilities	Improvement of employee capabilities through recruitment, training, performance appraisal, career development, motivation and rewards systems – Desimone et al. (2002), Hubbard (2000), Limerick and Cunningham (1993), Mukhi, Hampton and Barnwell (1990), Nankervis et al. (1999) and Quinn, Faerman, Thompson and McGrath (1996). Continuous learning capabilities - Burns (1995) and Marquardt (1996).
Capacity for change	Processes and procedures to encourage organisational and individual capacity for change - Brewer (1995), Cacioppe (1997), Dunphy and Stace (1990), Gretzel (1999), Strom and Wallace (2003) and Wilson (1996a; 1996b).
INFRASTRUCTURE	
Roles, structures, policies and processes	A knowledge enhancing infrastructure that supports collaboration and cooperation to achieve transference of knowledge between individuals and groups, both internally and to the external environment - Hansen (1999), Hubbard (2000), Mintzberg (1995) and Sveiby (2001).
TECHNOLOGY	
Design, functionality, integration, speed, simplicity, access	Development and maintenance of technological systems to improve coordination, decision-making and planning. Specifically:- SKM Systems - Bair and O'Connor (1998), Beckman (1999), Bhatt (2002) and Lin, Hung, Wu and Lin (2002). Tourism Systems+ – Baker and Sussmann (1999), Buhalis (1999), Frew (2000) and Sheldon (1997).
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	
Metrics for contribution, usage, effectiveness	Core processes for continuous improvement within the organisation for sustainability of all stakeholders - Chapman and Hyland (2000) and Hyland, Mellor, O'Mara and Kondepudi (2002).

A case study was conducted in which the assessment instrument was applied. The case study was conducted at the Echo Point Visitor Information Centre, which forms part of the Blue Mountains Tourism Authority (BMTA) in New South Wales. A case study approach was adopted because it enabled a detailed investigation of a single organisation with a view to providing an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study (Cassell & Symon 1994, p. 209). The case study included analysis of documentation provided by the VIC and key stakeholders (including annual reports, business plans, position descriptions, etc.) and interviews with stakeholders. Interviews were conducted with –

- Regional Tourism Organisation Manager and Marketing Manager
- Visitor Information Centre Manager
- Staff members of the VIC
- The VICs Telephone Enquiry Centre Staff

The interviews were semi-structured and explored the checklist items from the SKM Assessment Instrument. The following set of documents were analysed, again using the instrument to guide thematic analysis –

- NSW State Government Accreditation Scheme for VIC's
- Strategic, Management and Business plans
- Vision and Mission Statements
- Organisational Charts
- Duty Statements
- Policy and Procedural Manuals
- Computer Systems Manual
- Written communications to stakeholders

The analysis of documentation enabled comments to be made about the extent to which SKM components were explicitly identified and recorded in the organisation, while the interviews focused on the extent to which stakeholders perceived these components to be enacted.

Chapter 4

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Leadership

Results from the leadership elements in the Trussler/Andrews model (2002) highlighted that the Echo Point VIC has a standing business plan, which is linked to the BMTA business and marketing plan, which then flows to Blue Mountains Tourism Regional Strategy. All plans are linked through specific objectives and key result areas. Each plan has been developed through an iterative process involving staff and regional stakeholders, ensuring value issues are addressed for all stakeholders, while still focusing on customer satisfaction. The strategy development process includes analysis of the past, present and future business environment including changes in market share, leadership, players, market shifts, costs, pricing and competition, ensuring strategies are consistent with external demands. This process also addresses the requirements of the organisation to achieve success, identifying the capabilities needed to carry out the strategies. However, this did not specifically address knowledge issues, therefore highlighting an absence of a clear link with strategies and the development and use of knowledge within the organisation.

The leadership style in evidence was supportive of new initiatives, providing information on wider organisational issues, but allowing the day-to-day operations to be managed by the team. Key managers within the BMTA and the Echo Point VIC could articulate the future directions of the organisation and relate these to day-to-day activities. However, Echo Point staff were not fully conversant with issues at the higher strategic level and suggested the irregular communication between the City Council and the Centre was the determinant of this constraint. Leadership style and structures are in place, however, there is an absence of a SKM focus.

Other leadership initiatives that promoted the transfer of knowledge between stakeholders included:

- Regular BMTA board meetings with regional members to enhance the transfer of information and knowledge;
- Industry partnerships; and
- Combined marketing initiatives of the region enabling connectivity between the BMTA and tourism providers.

Culture

Supportive management has led to a culture that promotes excellent teamwork and greater ownership of work and service quality. The team environment has been achieved in part through open communication and a focus on the individual expertise that each member brings to the Echo Point VIC, together with the responsibility and power to customise the service for tourist needs. This has been enhanced by an ongoing commitment by staff to further their awareness of regional products and activities. A shared mindset is clearly in evidence at Echo Point.

Staff capabilities are maintained and improved within the Echo Point VIC through a series of formal and informal processes. Formal processes include recruitment strategies that support the culture and work ethics of the existing team and optimise team dynamics and broaden the individual areas of expertise. The Centre also carries out induction programs for new staff, formal job rotation between different VICs and the Booking Centre within the BMTA, a mentoring program, and quarterly staff meetings. There is also in place a performance appraisal system which identifies where new/additional training and development is required and to report on performance against set criteria. Informally, all staff have a long association within the region and have a wealth of knowledge and experience to bring to their work environment. There are formal procedures in place to capture this rich knowledge and share it amongst staff members at other Centres. However, one identified constraint to enhancing staff capability was the absence of any evidence of a rewards/motivational system in place for achieving beyond organisational expectations. Staff capabilities support the transfer of knowledge within the Echo Point VIC.

Change management was perceived by staff at the Echo Point VIC as one of their weaknesses. While management and staff seemingly had open communication channels, document analysis identified a lack of ongoing direction and focus and poor communication for change, lack of preparation for change, and a lack of ongoing training and development to successfully achieve organisational change. On an individual level there was staff resistance to change. There is a perceived low capacity for organisational change within the Echo Point VIC.

Infrastructure

The BMTA has a flat profile consisting of four autonomous units, which produce dedicated tourism products. There are two VICs (of which Echo Point VIC is one), an accommodation/tour booking and information call centre, and a destination marketing section. This allows staff to deliver a professional level of service to meet the individual needs of different stakeholders. A standardised level of service is also achieved through a full complement of paid staff, clearly stated roles and responsibilities, training, and the development of and adherence to procedures manuals. Improvements have also been undertaken within the physical infrastructure at Echo Point to streamline service provision to retail customers and those customers seeking tourist information. However, two constraints were highlighted with the existing infrastructure. Firstly, it was identified that there was sometimes a conflict between information provision/retail functions within the Echo Point VIC. Secondly, due to geographical separation and autonomy from the City Council, communication channels were impaired. Existing policies, processes and regulation that are in place within the Echo Point VIC can be seen as supportive of collaboration and cooperation between autonomous units to achieve transference of knowledge.

Technology

The current technological systems available within the BMTA are distributed across the four autonomous units, with the Call Centre operating a bookings information system, and the VICs operating two PCs each. Echo Point VIC utilised one dedicated PC for the Centre Manager who used this system for email correspondence, updating a database of product information, and financial spreadsheets. The second PC is located on the shop floor and is dedicated to staff email access and internet access to retrieve regional and product information when required. Currently Echo Point has a manual system for notifying the Call Centre of accommodation bookings taken within the Centre. Interviews identified that there were embedded methods for storage and exchange of information and knowledge through electronic database and email.

Constraints on the current system include restricted internet/intranet access within Echo Point VIC, no separate internet/intranet access for staff, and the cumbersome system for processing accommodation bookings. However, the BMTA Manager has championed the development of a fully integrated bookings system for access between all autonomous units. Current status of development includes evaluation of new technologies to determine appropriateness. Adequate technology is available for capture, storage and dissemination of knowledge within Echo Point, however, improved access, training and further developments are required to fully utilise the potential in managing the Centre's knowledge.

Continuous Improvement

The BMTA Regional Strategy encapsulates nine objectives for incremental implementation over a period of three years. Each objective addresses continuous improvement of tourism products and supporting initiatives within the region such as:

1. Increasing domestic visitor nights
2. Increasing international overnight stays
3. Improving regional website
4. Identify and address product development
5. Professional development of industry operators
6. Improve and facilitate good communication with and between members
7. Increase regional membership, particularly partnership development
8. Branding and repositioning of region
9. Continual development of 3 year Regional Tourism Strategy.

Stakeholder involvement in the development of these strategies suggests that the BMTA has the ability to work effectively across internal divisions and external boundaries, and values the continual appraisal and development of its products, its regional partnerships, and the effective direction and operation of the organisation. The BMTA has the capability for continuous improvement, driven at the strategic level and operationalised through accreditation guidelines, key result areas and performance appraisal, training and development.

Chapter 5

QUALITATIVE IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

There are substantial constraints on the capacity for VICs to develop and implement a SKM agenda internally. These constraints largely emerge from the complexity of the environment in which VICs operate. The management agenda is heavily influenced by the expectations and practices of external stakeholders, funding agents and other peripheral organisations. The existing SKM Framework adopted from Trussler and Andrews (2002) does not adequately account for the influence of external organisations, and the assessment tool subsequently requires revision. In particular, the expectation in the Framework is that leadership and organisational culture emerge from within the organisation, and that decisions on the key policy infrastructure are also internally driven. The adoption of a SKM agenda by organisations such as visitor information centres requires commitment from within the organisation and from its key external stakeholders. The checklist focuses on internal management, and will need to include items describing the relationship between the organisation and its external environments. In particular, these items should relate to the extent to which external organisations, which directly influence the VIC management agenda, accept the principles of knowledge management. The leadership, culture, and infrastructure elements of the assessment instrument could be extended to consider the 'knowledge structures' identified by Sveiby (2001), which are set out in Table 1.

The assessment instrument employed in this research was very sound in its examination of structures: between individuals; from individuals to external structures; from individual competence to internal structure; from internal structure to individual competence; from internal to external structure; and within the internal structure. It was less able to identify the constraints and practices associated with influences into the organisation.

Despite this limitation, the research was able to identify the recognition of the external environment as a significant enabler of SKM in the case study VIC. The research also demonstrated that the principles of SKM, as encapsulated in the assessment instrument, were relevant and important. The research highlighted some of the ways in which VICs may engage in learning, and the value of learning for management and staff. The assessment instrument provides a benchmarking tool for VICs generally to identify their capacity for organisational learning and knowledge management. Future research may be focused on implementation of the instrument across a number of VICs to ascertain the degree to which different structures (including funding, operations, management and accreditation) are associated with different knowledge management strategies.

Appendix A: Instruction Book Tourist Observations VIC Mapping



Improving the Yield of Tourism in Regional Areas: Knowledge Management within Visitor Information Centres

Instruction Book

Tourist Observations VIC Mapping

CONTENTS

1. Tourist Observations

Frequency
Behaviour
Method
Problems Encountered

2. Visitor Information Centre – Physical Mapping

3. Contact List

Attachment A Data Collection Sheet – Tourist Frequency

Attachment B Data Collection Sheet – Tourist Behaviour

Attachment C Physical Map – VIC

Tourist Observations

To supplement the qualitative data from staff interviews and the quantitative data from the Visitors survey, observations can be documented on tourist behaviour while visiting each Centre. (Note: observations were not restricted to those visitors who completed a survey, but were documented on all visitors to the Centre at specified times). These observations were broken down into two distinct categories – frequency and behaviour.

Frequency

Observations on frequency refer to the number of times visitors access different facilities available within the Centre.

Behaviour

The purpose of tracking tourist behaviour was to ascertain the sequence of engagement with the different facilities within the Centre.

Both Frequency and Behavioural observations were compiled within distinct types of visitor groups. To enable consistency between the different types of data collection/analysis, the groups identified within the survey were utilised.

Method

As part of a Blue Mountains pilot study, two researchers conducted observations during a two hourly period from 10.00am to 12.00 noon. Depending on resources available, the following schedule could be utilised for future data collection to ensure broad coverage of days/timeframes:-

Week 1	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9-11am	*		*		*		*
11am-1pm		*		*		*	
1-3pm	*		*		*		*
3-5pm		*		*		*	

Week 2	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9-11am		*		*		*	
11am-1pm	*		*		*		*
1-3pm		*		*		*	
3-5pm	*		*		*		*

During the pilot study, each visitor/group was categorised as they entered the Centre, and were tracked while they were within the confines of the building to ascertain their pattern of engagement with the different facilities available. An example data collection sheet for Frequency information has been included in Attachment A, while an example sheet for Behaviour is included in Attachment B.

It should be noted that this data does not give the number of visitors to the centre (this is usually readily available from the Centre) but an account of how many times each facility within the centre is utilised and in what sequence.

Problems Encountered

Problems were encountered with categorising some of the tourist groups, as some groups drifted into the centre at separate times, e.g. some separately, and some with a partner. However, if the observer makes a generalisation on tourist status as they enter the building, the behaviour of the tourist should be indicative of this status (i.e. a person on their own in the centre will generally behave as a person travelling alone).

Physical Mapping

It is anticipated that there will be wide-ranging physical layouts for each individual centre. Therefore, to ensure clarity of analysis for both behavioural and frequency observations, it is necessary to construct a detailed map of the physical environment of each Centre.

An example map has been set out in Attachment C for your information. This map has been developed using a software package for drawing maps/floor plans called Visio 2000. If this software package is not available, then a line drawing can be faxed/mailed to one of the research assistants listed for input into the system.

Each map needs to detail the floor layout including labels for information, merchandising and craft sections, etc. If a Centre wishes to have more detailed behavioural patterns tracked then it will be necessary to note the position of different lines of merchandise on the map.

Attachment A

Data Collection Sheet – Tourist Frequency

Observer _____

Location _____

Time (From) _____ (To) _____

Type of Group	Touch Screens	Merchandise	Information Counter	View
Travelling Alone	//// /	///	//// //// //	//// /
Adult Couple				
Family Group				
Friends/ Relatives with Children				
Friends/ Relatives without Children				
Business Associates with Family				
Business Associates Without Family				
School/Sporting/Club Groups				
Other (Please specify)				

Attachment B

Data Collection Sheet – Tourist Behaviour

Observer _____

Location _____

Time (From) _____ (To) _____

Type of Group	Touch Screens	Information Counter	View	Merchandise (Crafts, souvenirs, cards, clothes)
Travelling Alone	1	3	5	2 Craft, 4 Cards 6 clothes
Adult Couple				
Family Group				
Friends/ Relatives with Children				
Friends/ Relatives without Children				
Business Associates with Family				
Business Associates Without Family				
School/Sporting/Club Groups				
Other (Please specify)				

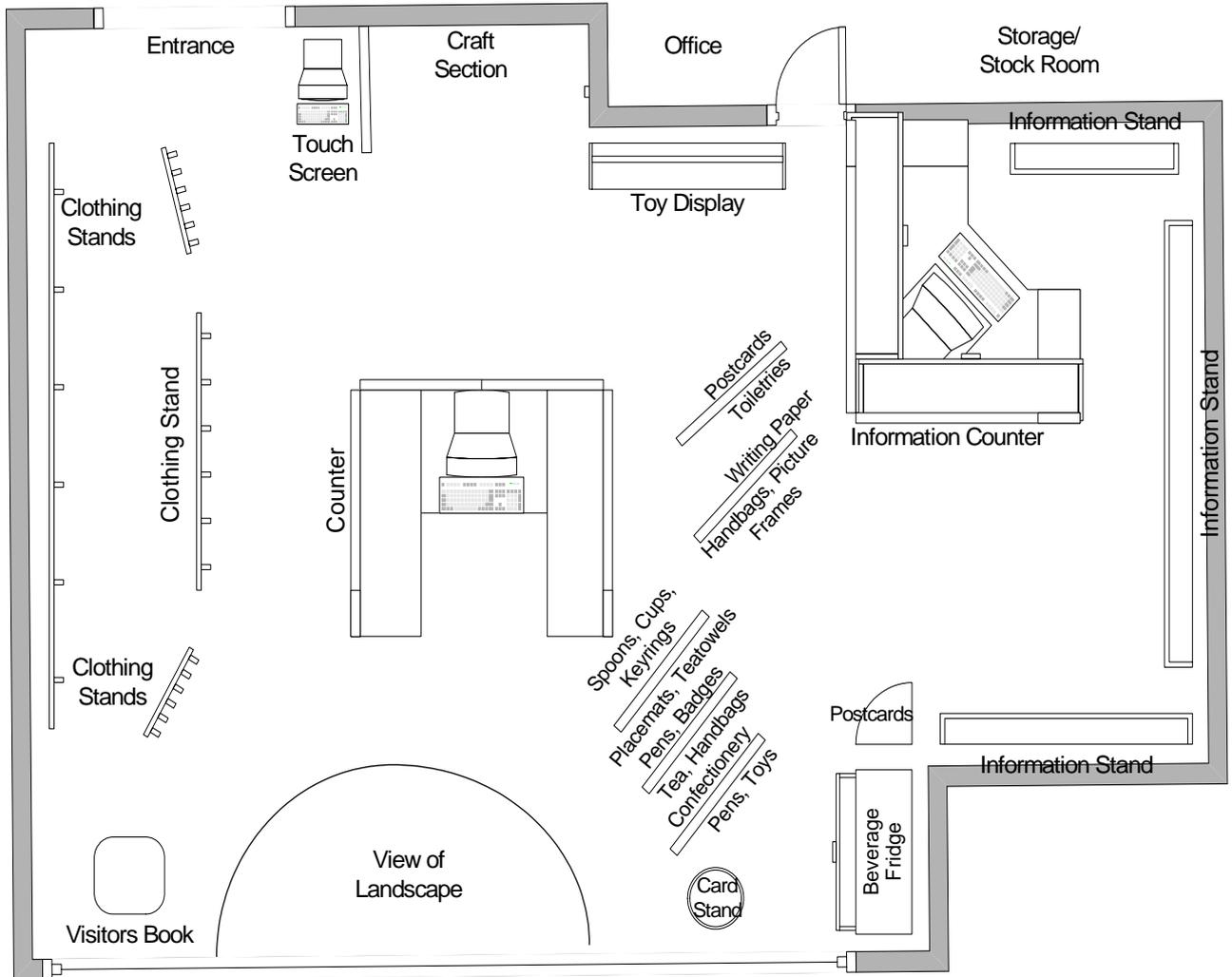
Attachment C

Physical Map

Location: _____

Compiled by: _____

Date: _____



Appendix B: Information Book for Staff Interviews



Improving the Yield of Tourism in Regional Areas: Knowledge Management within Visitor Information Centres

Information Book

Staff Interviews

CONTENTS

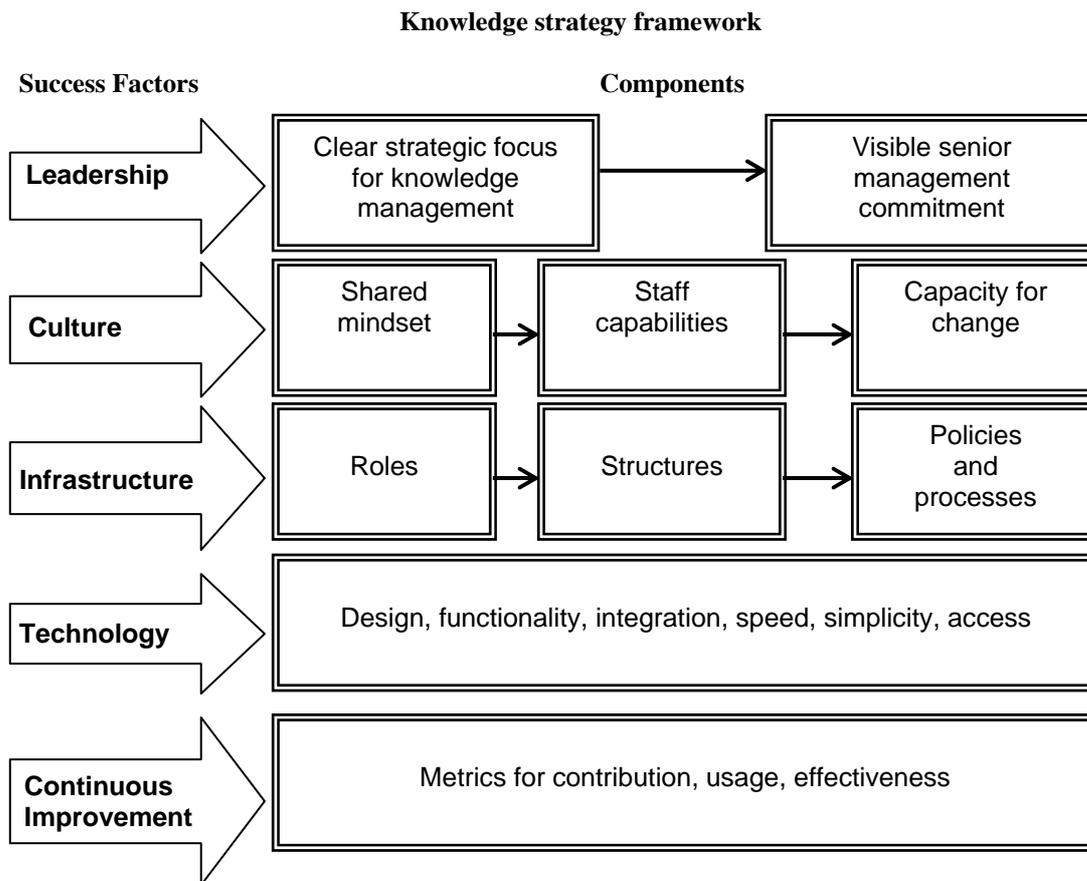
- 1. Introduction**
 - 2. Theoretical Framework**
 - 3. Type of Interviews**
 - 4. Method**
 - 5. Questions**
 - 6. Transcription**
 - 7. Contact List**
- Attachment A – Example Data Collection Sheet**

Introduction

Knowledge Management is a widely used term, which incorporates a multi-disciplinary approach to achieving organisational objectives by making the best use of knowledge. It focuses on processes such as sharing, acquiring and creating knowledge, and the cultural and technical foundations that support them. The goal of knowledge management is to align knowledge processes with organisational objectives. Therefore, the impetus for analysing each Centre from a knowledge management point of view is to determine whether organisational practices can be improved to assist in boosting the yield in each region.

Theoretical Framework

The model selected to structure this research is set out below for your information and gives a good indication of the topics that will be covered in the interviews. The model was developed by Dr Kate Andrews, who has extensively studied knowledge management in organisations within Australia.



Andrews (2002) – Adapted from Trussler (1998)

Type of Interviews

The type of interviews proposed will be in a semi-structured format that includes an overarching topic, general themes, targeted issues and specific questions, with a predetermined sequence for their occurrence. It is anticipated that semi-structured interviews will maintain a balance between free-flowing and directed conversations and gain a broad range of information on the Centre.

Method

The procedure for each interview will include a verbal request from each participant to be included in the research project, at which time it will be stipulated that the interviews are completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time. All information gathered from participants will be held in the strictest of confidence, and each interview transcript will be made available to individuals so that they can edit their responses before the data is analysed. To assist with accuracy in transcription and analysis it may be useful to tape each interview, contingent to participant agreement.

Each interview takes approximately 30-50mins, with the first five minutes spent outlining to each participant the nature of the research project, the time involved, and what is hoped to be gained by interviewing them.

Questions

Following is a table outlining the topics, themes and directed questions for staff interviews.

Overarching Topics	Targeted Issues	Specific Questions
Leadership	Clear strategic focus for the Centre, senior management commitment to goals of the Centre	Does the Centre have a strategic plan? If so, is it widely known / circulated? Does the Centre / RTO management support the strategic direction of the Centre? What type of leadership is in evidence within the Centre?
Culture	Shared mindset, staff capabilities, capacity for change	Is the current culture within the Centre supportive of knowledge sharing? Does it reflect the service level required? Is adequate training provided to build/enhance staff capabilities? What training is undertaken and how often is it provided? Are staff able to/encouraged to embrace change?
Infrastructure	Roles, structures, policies and procedures	Is each staff member aware of their role within the organisation? Is there supporting documentation/guidelines on how to carry out this role? Does the structure of the Centre enable role sharing/job rotation and staff advancement? What is the ratio of paid staff to volunteers? What is the relationship between the two?
Technology	Design, functionality, integration, speed, simplicity access	What technologies are there available to assist with service to customers? Is it appropriate for what is required? Is it easy to use? Does it provide timely information? Is there adequate access?
Continuous Improvement	Usage of knowledge, effectiveness of transfer to colleagues/visitors	Is the current information/knowledge base within the Centre utilised to provide better service to the Centre's customers? How does the Centre build on the existing information / knowledge base within the organisation? How are staff empowered to improve and show initiative? What ongoing training is provided? What strategies are employed for up-selling of regional products? How does the Centre link its products with those of other regions to provide a better product?

Transcription

Transcripts can be coordinated for each Centre and analysed to determine:

- Degree of strategic focus for the Centre in terms of service provision;
- Knowledge acquisition;
- The degree of service coordination within each Centre;
- Strategies for up-selling the regions products;
- Centre/operator interactions;
- Presence/absence of service technologies;
- Perceived effectiveness of technologies;
- Perceived encouragement to visit other regions from the Centre; and
- Linking strategies with other regions.

These factors can be analysed together with survey data to determine the relationship between service factors and yield impacts, such as:

- Whether Centres with strong knowledge management practices have influence on yield factors for specific markets/ experience groups;
- Whether yield factors differ for visitor groups who interact more with specific technologies; and
- Whether the presence and location of service technologies is related to influence on yield factors.

Attachment A

Staff Interviews – Data Collection Sheet

INTERVIEWER _____

PARTICIPANT _____

LOCATION _____

TIME (From) _____ **(To)** _____

Leadership

Does the Centre have a strategic plan?

If so, is it widely known/circulated?

Does the Council/RTO management support the strategic direction of the Centre?
.....

What type of leadership is in evidence within the Centre?

Culture

Is the current culture within the Centre supportive of knowledge sharing?
.....

Does it reflect the service level required?

Is adequate training provided to build/enhance staff capabilities?.....

What training is undertaken and how often is it provided?

Are staff able to/encouraged to embrace change?

Infrastructure

Is each staff member aware of their role within the organisation?.....
.....
.....

Is there supporting documentation/guidelines on how to carry out this role?.....
.....
.....

Does the structure of the Centre enable role sharing/job rotation and staff advancement?.....
.....
.....

What is the ratio of paid staff to volunteers?
.....
.....

What is the relationship between the two?
.....
.....

Technology

What technologies are there available to assist with service to customers?
.....
.....

Is it appropriate for what is required both of front of house and back of house?.....
.....
.....

Is it easy to use for both customers and staff?
.....
.....

Does it provide timely information?
.....
.....

As technology increases do customers demand more timely information?.....
.....
.....

Is there adequate access for staff and customers?
.....
.....

Continuous Improvement

Is the current information/ knowledge base (i.e. fact files/databases, etc.) within the centre utilised to provide better service to the Centre's customers?
.....
.....

How does the Centre build on the existing information/ knowledge base within the organisation?
.....
.....
.....

How are staff empowered to improve and show initiative?

What ongoing training is provided?

What strategies are employed to for up-selling of regional products?.....

How does the Centre link its products with those of other regions to provide a better service?.....

References

- Andrews, K. (2002). 'Value From Knowledge: The Case for KM Strategy Development', Paper presented to the Standards Australia KM Challenge, Sydney, 8 May.
- Aurora (1998). 'How to Apply for Membership', Visitor Information Network Information Manual, 26 October.
- Bair, J.H. & O'Connor, E. (1998). 'The State of the Product in Knowledge Management', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 2, pp. 20-27.
- Baker, M. & Sussmann, S. (1999). 'Factors Affecting the Contribution of Information Technology in the Hospitality Industry' in: D. Buhalis & W. Schertler (Eds). *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 1999, Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 1999*, Springerwiew, New York.
- Beckman, T.J. (1999). 'The Current State of Knowledge Management', *Knowledge Management Handbook*. CRC Press, London, pp. 1.1-1.22.
- Bhatt, G.D. (2002). 'Knowledge Management in Organizations: Examining the Interaction Between Technologies, Techniques, and People', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 15, pp. 68-75.
- Bollinger, A.S. & Smith, R.D. (2001). 'Managing Organizational Knowledge as a Strategic Asset', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 5, pp. 8-18.
- Brewer, A.M. (1995). *Change Management: Strategies for Australian Organisations*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, NSW.
- Bryman, A. (1991). 'Leadership in Organizations' in: S.R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W.R. Nord (Eds). *Managing Organizations*, SAGE Publications, London.
- Buhalis, D. (1999). 'The Cost and Benefits of Information Technology and the Internet for Small and Medium-Sized Tourism Enterprises' in: D. Buhalis & W. Schertler (Eds). *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 1999, Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 1999*, Springerwiew, New York.
- Burns, R. (1995). *The Changing Context: The Adult Learner at Work*, Business and Professional Publishing, Sydney, NSW.
- Burns, D.L. & Murphy, L. (1998). 'An analysis of the promotion of marine tourism and its markets in Far North Queensland' in E. Laws, B. Faulkner & G. Moscardo (Eds). *Embracing and Managing Change in Tourism: International Case Studies*, Routledge, London, pp. 415-430.
- Cacioppe, R. (1997). 'Implementing Successful Change', *Management*, June, pp. 25-28.
- Carlopio, J., Andrewartha, G. & Armstrong, H. (2001). *Developing Management Skills: A Comprehensive Guide for Leaders*, 2nd edn, Prentice Hall, Sydney, NSW.
- Carson, D., Beattie, S. & Gove, B. (2002). *Local Government Indicators of Sustainable Management of Tourism*, Centre for Regional Tourism Research, Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.
- Cassell, C. & Symon, G. (1994). *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research: A Practical Guide*, SAGE Publications, London.
- Chapman, R. & Hyland, P. (2000). 'Strategy and Continuous Improvement in Small-to-Medium Australian Manufacturers', *Integrated Manufacturing Systems*, vol. 11, pp. 171-179.
- Desimone, R.L., Werner, J.M. & Harris, D.M. (2002). *Human Resource Development*, 3rd edn, Harcourt College Publishers, Sydney, NSW.
- Dolan, S.L. & Garcia, S. (2002). 'Managing by Values: Cultural Redesign for Strategic Organizational Change at the Dawn of the 21st Century', *Journal of Management Development*, vol. 21, pp. 101-117.
- Dredge, D. (2001). 'Local Government Tourism Planning and Policy-making in New South Wales: Institutional Development and Historical Legacies', *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 4, pp. 355-380.
- Dunphy, D. & Stace, D. (1990). *Under New Management*, Chapter 4: Strategies for Organizational Transition, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, NSW.
- Fallon, L. & Kriwoken, K. (2002). *Key Elements to Effective and Sustainable Visitor Centres: An Evaluation of the Strahan Visitor Centre, Tasmania, Australia*, Sustainable Tourism CRC, Gold Coast, QLD.
- Fesenmaier, D.R. & Vogt, C.A. (1993). 'Evaluating the Economic Impact of Travel Information Provided at Indiana Welcome Centres', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 31, pp. 33-37.

- Fesenmaier, D.R., Vogt, C.A. & Stewart, W.P. (1993) 'Investigating the Influence of Welcome Centre Information on Travel Behavior', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 31, pp. 47-51.
- Frew, A. (2000). 'Information and Communications Technology in the Travel and Tourism Domain: Perspectives and Direction', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 39, pp. 136-145.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999). *Organizations in Depth*, SAGE Publications, London.
- Gretzel, U. (1999). 'Capacity for Change and its Influence on Effective IT Use' in: D. Buhalis & W. Schertler (Eds). *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 1999, Proceedings of the International Conference in Innsbruck, Austria, 1999*, Springerwiewer, New York.
- Hall, B.P. (2001). 'Values Development and Learning Organizations', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 5, pp. 19-32.
- Hansen, M.T. (1999). 'The Search-Transfer Problem: The Role of Weak Ties in Sharing Knowledge Across Organization Subunits', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 44, pp. 82-111.
- Hobbins, S. (1999). 'Accreditation of Queensland Visitor Information Centres: A Consumer-Based Perspective', *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, vol. 5, pp. 387-399.
- Hubbard, G. (2000). *Strategic Management: Thinking, Analysis and Action*, Prentice Hall, Sydney, NSW.
- Hyland, P., Mellor, R., O'Mara, E. & Kondepudi, R. (2002). 'A Comparison of Australian Firms and Their Use of Continuous Improvement Tools', *Measuring Business Excellence*, vol. 6, pp. 52-58.
- Jenkins, J. (2000). 'The Dynamics of Regional Tourism Organisations in New South Wales, Australia: History, Structures and Operations', *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 3, pp. 175-203.
- Leiper, N. (1995). *Tourism Management*, RMIT Press, Collingwood, VIC.
- Liebowitz, J. & Beckman, T. (1998). *Knowledge Organizations: What Every Manager Should Know*, St Lucie Press, Boca Raton, FL.
- Limerick, D. & Cunningham, B. (1993). *Managing the New Organisation*, Business and Professional Publishing, Sydney, NSW.
- Lin, C., Hung, H.C., Wu, J.Y. & Lin, B. (2002) 'A Knowledge Management Architecture in a Collaborative Supply Chain', *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, vol. 42, pp. 83-94.
- Malmberg, A. & Maskell, P. (1997). 'Towards an explanation of regional specialization and industry agglomeration', *European Planning Studies*, vol. 5, pp. 25-41.
- Marquardt, M.J. (1996). *Building a Learning Organization*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- McDermott, R. & O'Dell, C. (2001). 'Overcoming Cultural Barriers to Sharing Knowledge', *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 5, pp. 76-85.
- McKercher, B. & Ritchie, M. (1996). 'Local Government Tourism Managers: Professionals or Practitioners?', *Proceedings from the Australian Tourism and Hospitality Research Conference: 'Tourism and Hospitality Research - Australian and International Perspectives'*, pp. 159-170.
- McKercher, B. & Ritchie, M. (1997). 'The Third Tier of Public Sector Tourism: A Profile of Local Government Tourism Officers in Australia', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 36, pp. 66-72.
- Mintzberg, H. (1995). 'The Structuring of Organizations' in: H. Mintzberg & J.B. Quinn (1996). *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases* (3rd edn), Prentice Hall, NJ, pp. 331-349.
- Moscardo, G. (1993). 'Mental as anything: Psychological principles for enhancing visitor experience', *Proceedings of the 1993 National Conference of the Interpretation Australia Conference*, Newcastle.
- Moscardo, G. (1998). 'Interpretation and Sustainable Tourism: Functions, examples and Principles', *Journal of Tourism Studies*, vol. 9, pp. 2-13.
- Moscardo, G. (1999). 'Communicating with two million tourists. A formative evaluation of an interpretive brochure'. *Journal of Interpretation Research*, vol 4, pp. 21-37.
- Mukhi, S. Hampton, S. & Barnwell, N. (1990). *Australian Management*, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, NSW.
- Nankervis, A.R., Compton, R.L. & McCarthy, T.E. (1999). *Strategic Human Resource Management*, 3rd edn, Nelson Publishing, Melbourne, VIC.
- Ogbonna, E. & Harris, L.C. (2002). 'Managing Organisational Culture: Insights from the Hospitality Industry', *Human Resource Management Journal*, vol. 12, pp. 33-53.
- Pearce, P.L. (1991). 'Visitor centres and their functions in the landscape of tourism', in: G Moscardo & K Hughes (Eds). *Visitor Centres: Exploring new territory*, Department of Tourism, James Cook University, Townsville, QLD, pp. 7-14.

- Pennington-Gray, L. & Vogt, C. (2003). 'Examining welcome centre visitor's travel and information behaviours: Does location of centres or residency matter?', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 41, pp. 272-281
- Quinn, R.E., Faerman, S.R., Thompson, M.P. & McGrath, M.R. (1996). *Becoming a Master Manager: A Competency Framework*, 2nd edn, John Wiley and Sons, Brisbane, QLD.
- Sarros, J.C. & Butchatsky, O. (1998). *Leadership*, Harper-Collins, Sydney, NSW.
- Schein, E. (1994). 'Organisational and Managerial Culture as a Facilitator or Inhibitor of Organizational Learning', MIT Organizational Learning Network Working Paper, Cambridge, Mass, p. 7.
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Random House, Sydney, NSW.
- Sheldon, P.J. (1997). *Tourism Information Technology*, CABI Publishing, New York.
- Strom, J. & Wallace, M. (2003). 'Organisational Change in a Regional, Local Council', *Australasian Journal of Business and Social Inquiry*, vol. 1, pp. 51-65.
- Sveiby, K.E. (2001). 'A Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm to Guide in Strategy Formulation', *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, vol. 2, pp. 344-358.
- Tait, R., Richins, H. & Hanlon, C. (1993). 'Perceived Training Needs in Sport, Tourism and Recreation Management', *Australian Journal of Leisure and Recreation*, vol. 3, pp. 12-26.
- Tierney, P.T. (1993). 'The Influence of State Traveller Information Centres on Tourist Length of Stay and Expenditures', *Journal of Travel Research*, vol. 31, pp. 28-51.
- Tissen, R., Andriessen, D. & Lekanne Deprez, F. (2000). *The Knowledge Dividend: Creating High Performance Companies Through Value-Based Knowledge Management*, Prentice Hall, Sydney, NSW.
- Tonge, R., Myott, D.E. & Enright, K. (1995). *Why Should Local Government Invest in Tourism*, Country Victoria Tourism Council, Melbourne, VIC.
- Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation (1999). *Queensland Visitor Information Centre Study*, Tourism Potential, Kenmore, QLD.
- Tourism Strategy and Development Services and Kerridge Consulting Group (1998). *Exploration of the Use and Non-Use of Visitor Information Centres in NSW*, Council of Tourist Associations and Tourism New South Wales.
- Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the Wave of Culture: Understanding Cultural Diversity in Business*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, London.
- Wigg, K.M. (1999). 'Introducing Knowledge Management into the Enterprise', in J. Liebowitz (Ed). *Knowledge Management Handbook*, CRC Press, New York.
- Wilson, D.A (1996a). *Managing Knowledge*, The Institute of Management, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Wilson, D.A (1996b). 'Developing a Knowledge Strategy', *California Management Review*, vol. 41, pp. 125-145.
- Zack, M.H. (1999). 'Developing a Knowledge Strategy', *California Management Review*, vol. 41, pp. 125-145.

AUTHORS

Prof Margaret Deery

Professor Deery is currently the director of the Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Research, Faculty of Business and Law, Victoria University. Dr Deery has extensive experience in research with the human resource management and labour market areas. She has worked on a number of funded research projects and, in her position within the Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Research, has considerable experience in research management. Email: marg.deery@vu.edu.au

Prof Leo Jago

Professor Jago is currently the Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Director of Research for the Sustainable Tourism CRC and also Professor in Tourism at Victoria University. Professor Jago was Chair of the Council of Australian University Tourism and Hospitality Educators (CAUTHE), and is a Board Member for a wide range of tourism and research organisations. Email: leo.jago@vu.edu.au

Dean Carson

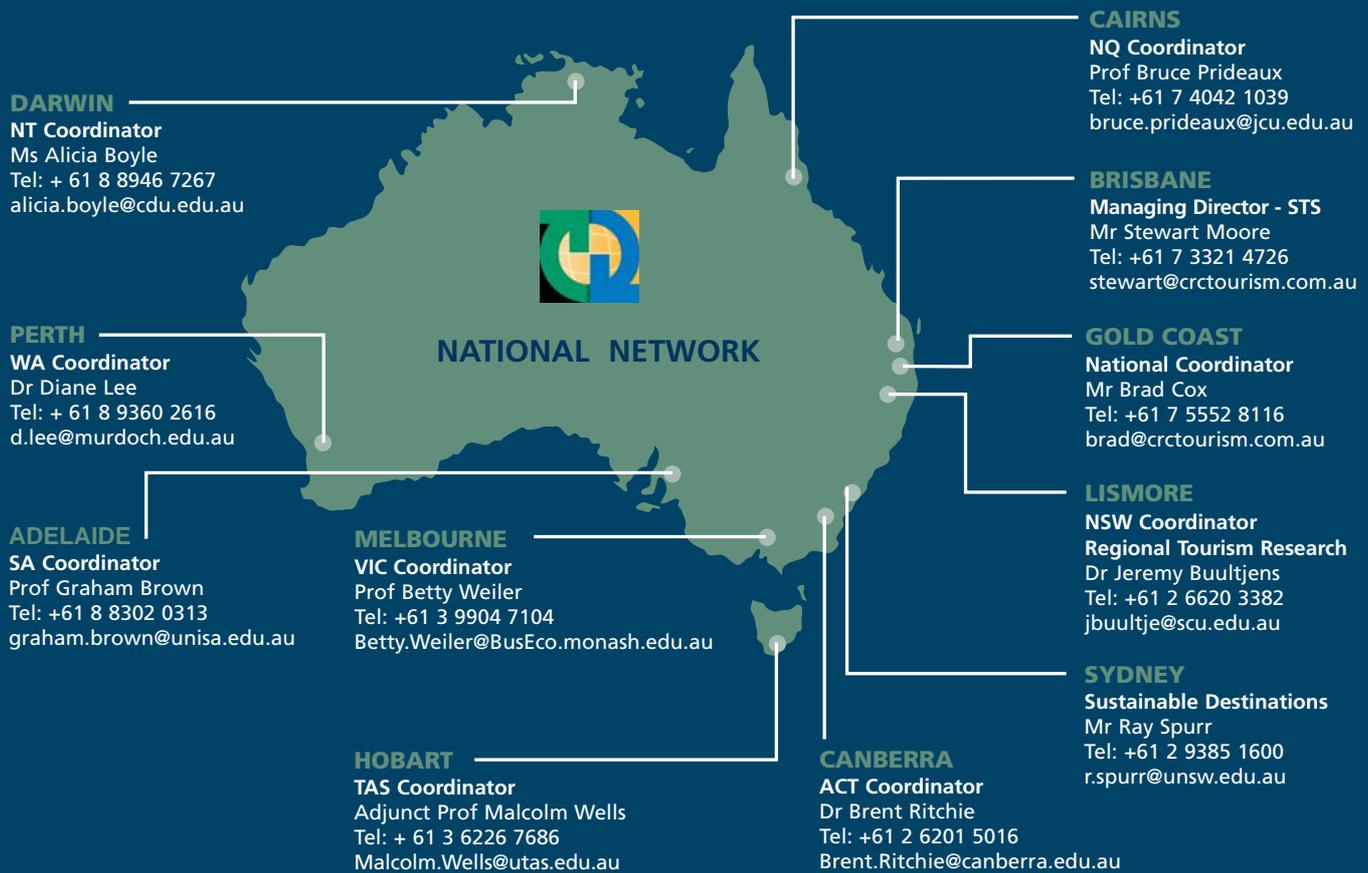
Dean Carson is currently the Principal Research Fellow with the Tourism research Group at Charles Darwin University. Dean Carson has completed his PhD on the role of online technologies in fostering innovation in regional tourism systems. His research interests include: regional development and innovation, local government management of tourism, and the development of information systems for rural and remote enterprises. Email: d.carson@cdu.edu.au

Sean Daugherty

Sean has worked in the field of nature-based tourism for a number of years in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Fiji, and Australia. In early 2002, through tourism work experience in developing countries Sean began conducting research in Academia at the University of Tasmania on a Sustainable Tourism CRC industry-based project on Pro Poor Tourism (PPT) / Sustainable Tourism ~ Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP). Since then Sean has worked on a number of tourism and small business research projects at the University of Tasmania, the Centre for Hospitality and Tourism Research at Victoria University, and currently at Victoria University as the research coordinator for the Small Business Research Unit. He is also a sessional tutor for the School of Hospitality, Tourism, and Marketing at Victoria University.

Kim Adams

Kim completed her undergraduate studies at Southern Cross University in Tourism, followed by an Honours degree that investigated the impacts of Visitor Information Centres within a tourism system. Kim currently works as a researcher in the Centre for Regional Tourism Research, as a Tutor in tourism studies at Southern Cross University, and is a full-time PhD student.



CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd
 [ABN 53 077 407 286]

PMB 50
 GOLD COAST MC QLD 9726
 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 7 5552 8172
 Facsimile: +61 7 5552 8171

Email: info@crctourism.com.au
<http://www.crctourism.com.au>