WHY YOU NEED TOURISM MANAGEMENT TRAINING,
RESEARCH AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY LEVEL
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Although you may not know me, I feel that I know you. My first 20 years in tourism education were spent in another land of lakes, the state of Michigan. And, during that time, I had many occasions to visit your beautiful state. It was somewhere back in the '50s that I became acquainted with and learned to respect one of your own pioneers in tourism education, Larry Simonson. Later on, I had the privilege of serving as his major professor for his doctoral work at Texas A&M University. I am sure that many of you appreciate the hundreds of instructive meetings and the many publications that he has produced from his office in Grand Rapids. We view his Minnesota Tourist Travel Notes as a model for extension education in this country. I was pleased to hear both Arnold Hewes and Lt. Gov. Martene Johnson pledge their support for this Extension program.

For several years, you in Minnesota benefitted from the tourism research by a former colleague of mine, Dr. Uel Blank, now retired from the University of Minnesota. Another of our graduates from Texas A&M, Dr. Tom Wood, has been performing outstanding tourism and recreation research from his office with the university in Duluth. And, just last year, at a meeting in Voyageur's National Park, I participated in a very important "first" in this country. This was the first time that representatives of the National Park Service met with tourism specialists to discuss the research needs concerning tourism and the national parks.

I cite these only to let you know that I have had some acquaintance with your fine state and recognize some of the advances that you have made in the field of tourism research and education. But, today, I am not basing my comments on my limited understandings of tourism education in Minnesota but upon virtually a lifetime of an active role in tourism education elsewhere.

Regarding the topic assigned to me, I would like to make just three points today.

POINT ONE—We in the United States, and generally throughout the world, are tourism illiterate.

On the surface, that sounds very pontifical on my part—even insulting. But, notice I said tourism illiterate. I have every confidence that you are very knowledgeable, and I hope successful, in some aspect of tourism. But, looking at the overall picture in this country, tourism, as a single identifiable phenomenon is relatively new. Until recently, tourism was never mentioned beyond annual meetings such as this. It was not identified as a significant part of the economy; never entered into state or national policy; and was not a subject of study at our universities.
And so, you, like I did, learned what you know about tourism from your own experience. There were no books, no guidelines, and certainly no research documents.

Now, you say, there is nothing wrong with experience. But, in other fields of endeavor, and over the past history of civilization, we have learned that experience does have some limitations as a source of learning.

* Individually, in one lifetime, you and I cannot learn everything by experience—we just can't experience that many things.
* Experience does not make for progress. The knowledge gained by experience tends to die with us.
* Our limited experience does not necessarily transfer well to new situations that we haven't experienced.
* Much of what we learn by experience is training and not education in a broad sense. There is a difference. The educated person, needed in today's competitive world, cannot rely on his singular personal experience.

And so, a few of us, back in the '40s, with very little to go on besides inquisitiveness and considerable determination, began to study tourism. Against strong academic snobbery from our university colleagues and administrators, we began to realize the importance of tourism but even then didn't understand its enormity.

It wasn't until 12 years ago, in 1972, that three of us, at different universities, independently came out with the first tourism books in this country. I emphasize this to remind ourselves of how recent this phenomenon is and how we have not benefitted from many years of study, such as found in other economic fields and academic disciplines.

Let me give you some examples from my observations and study that may help illustrate the need for much better education in tourism.

* As I go to state tourism meetings, I hear much complaining about the fact that legislators don't understand tourism. This hasn't changed much in 30 years.

* As I work with communities who seek greater economic impact from tourism, I find them generally ignorant of what it takes to increase tourism. One very historic city in Texas, where the first shot of the Texas Revolution occurred, suggested that all they needed for expanded tourism was a waterslide.

* Recently, as part of a tourism planning class, I took my students on a field trip. The head of the visitors bureau in a city of 100,000 stated that they had nothing to do with tourists—they only worked with convention participants. The thousands of tourists who came to their historic sites and their parks were of no concern to them.
* In tourism conferences, I never hear mention of the research on recreational travel. And yet, great volumes of data on recreation, of particular relevance to tourism, have been compiled for state recreation plans. Few people in tourism avail themselves of these data.

* Recently, when I published a bulletin on resource analysis for assessing tourism potential of regions in Texas, one of our state tourism leaders said he never knew before that resources had anything to do with tourism. Yet, the waters of Texas in 1983, provided for over a $2 billion expenditure on fishing, swimming, and boating. In that year, another $2 billion was spent by tourists sightseeing and driving for pleasure, highly dependent upon the state's natural resources.

* In my work with tourism, I still find hotels believing they are selling rooms and airlines that think they are selling seats. These half-truths ignore the fact that they are, in reality, selling a service to travelers on their way to see and do something. Most often, they are ignorant of what that something is and how they relate to it.

    I mention these observations, not to put anyone down. I am as proud as you are regarding the advances in tourism that have taken place in the last few years.

    But, I still make my point. We know a lot about specific pieces of tourism but very little about tourism as a whole. A paradox of tourism is that it is made up of hundreds of separate entities with seemingly no relationship. Often, these separate parts are completely ignorant of one another, and sometimes even antagonistic. All this suggests that we need to be educated to the fact that we, in our individual enterprises, are part of a very dynamic system.

    **CHART "A"**

    This diagram is an attempt to show how we could put all of the tourism functions into five major components. Probably everyone in this room today can find himself represented by one of these components.

    Certainly, we must understand more about the preferences, interests, and travel ability of PEOPLE. But, people do not travel unless they are drawn to ATTRACTIONS. Therefore, we really should show a direct link between people and attractions. Unless we become interested in traveling away from home to see and do something, there is no tourism. It is only then that we are able to create the greatest economic impact from tourism, through the SERVICES AND FACILITIES. But, we also need two additional components to complete the functional system. Obviously, TRANSPORTATION is critical but I find very few transportation interests who really understand tourism. And finally, the component that we generally hear the most about is that of INFORMATION AND DIRECTION, which includes marketing, promotion, and guidance, but especially literature and interpretation for what Frommer calls the intelligent traveler.
This overall view emphasizes the fact that the business sector is intimately linked with all other sectors, including non-profit organizations and governments as developers of parks, recreation areas, and often transportation. The more that we, as individuals, relate to others in this system, the more successful we can be.

Keeping these in mind, I would now like to cut across this system in another way.

**CHART "B"**

With this matrix, I would like to raise some questions about how well we're doing in tourism education. On the right are six categories of tourism function and activities, all of which have managers, supervisors, and specialized and other employees, as shown on the left.

By "providers of things to see and do," I refer not only to commercial attractions, such as theme parks, but also to government-supported park and recreation areas, as well as to historic sites and structures, supported by non-profit organizations. These are the real tourism "products." Increasingly, we see the field of attractions becoming more complicated. No longer is it easy to design, manage and market a successful attraction. Yet, where is this being taught? What institutions are producing future well-trained developers and managers of tourist attractions?

Another category is that of "providers of support equipment and services." By this I refer to those who sell RVs, camping foods, travel books, fishing equipment, golf equipment, as well as to hotels, motels, resorts and airlines. We must also include information centers, state tourism offices, highway departments, and travel agencies. We do have some very fine hotel and restaurant schools across the country but they are not necessarily accessible to all areas needing this education. And, how many of these schools really teach tourism in its overall context? A recent study of hotel education showed that travel and tourism subjects were ranked nearly on the bottom in importance — 28th in a list of 31 preferred subject areas.

The next category raises the issue of the training and education of all those who manufacture travel-related items, such as sports clothing, travel luggage, gifts, cameras, recreation vehicles, automobiles, and aircraft. They know much about the individual problems of product manufacture, labor, and pricing. But, how many have had training in tourism and understand how their products are used and how they might be better designed to be compatible with all the other parts of tourism?

A category of growing importance is that of the "policy-makers and regulators" of tourism. The recent changes at the national level, such as the Main Street program, airline and bus deregulation, and dropping the CAB, are having a major impact on tourism. Yet, how many of the political and agency leaders at all levels — federal, state, and local — have had training in the many intricacies of tourism?
Of great importance for the future of this growing field of tourism are the educators themselves. Who is training the educators? There are very few universities in this country, and even the world for that matter, that offer a Ph.D. in tourism. We are one of only two or three. The hotel school study I referred to earlier revealed that recruiting qualified faculty is a major issue. Each faculty member is required to teach too many students and some are required to spread themselves over classes for which they are not qualified. Who is training the teachers for the short courses, the community college courses, the adult education courses and the bachelors, masters and Ph.D. programs?

And finally, we are seeing great proliferation of organizations for tourism. But, how many managers and staff members of these organizations have had specialized training in tourism? Most that I know are good people, who have come from a variety of disciplines and on-the-job training. But, I don't know of very many that have had education in tourism.

My point here is that this tourism field is broad and deserving of much greater educational variety and depth than it is now receiving. I see no way that tourism in the future can hold its own, to say nothing of meeting entirely new needs in the next few decades, if we don't get busy now with tourism education.

POINT TWO—A major barrier to tourism education is the institution of education, itself.

Speaking as an educator who has fought the administrative battles in several universities, I can say without question that tourism education has a tough time to become academically legitimate and to compete when administrators cut the pie of budgets, faculties, and space. There are many reasons for this.

First of all, most universities today are undergoing much administrative shuffling. For those that are in financial difficulty, administrators are not anxious to add new programs, especially one viewed as so soft and frivolous as tourism. Seldom do they realize the significance of tourism and how they could increase their support if they heeded the call for education in this field. For universities that continue to grow, such as Texas A&M, this growth has increased confusion at the top. Unfortunately few people know how to manage a university, especially when it doubles or triples its student body and faculty within a few years. Tourism is not very high in priority compared to other administrative problems.

Second, tourism is a complicated field, demanding input from many disciplines—geography, economics, planning, sociology, business, management, marketing, political science, engineering, landscape architecture, architecture, health, recreation—just to name a few. Therefore, how are talents from these many disciplines brought together? In what college would tourism be placed? It just doesn't fit the traditional university structure.

Third, there has not generally been a ground swell of interest on the part of industry for the support of university education. Many times I have had deans and vice presidents say to me that until someone from the
field comes in and demands education in this program area, they will ignore it.

Fourth, there just isn't that much talent out there to get the educational job done. Even if universities approved new programs tomorrow, they would have difficulty finding qualified faculty. As I mentioned before, we are not producing many properly-trained faculty for future education in this field.

Fifth. One of our internal educational problems is how to handle the difference between training and education. You may think this is merely academic gobbledygook; but many of us believe it is a real issue. On the one hand, we certainly do need better trained people for the complete world of tourism. But training and skill development do not necessarily make one an educated person.

Throughout academia in recent years, there has been increasing concern over what seems to be the demise of education in favor of occupational training. This is not academic snobbery. This is a fundamental shift in emphasis. The classical view of going to a university to become an educated person is taking a back seat to careers and occupational training. This broke out in one of our popular publications in Texas, the Texas Monthly, recently:

"Today everybody wants to attend college—not necessarily to get an education but often just to get a job. In response, colleges have become more career-oriented and have surrendered their academic policies to professional accrediting organizations and the business community."

For tourism today, it is my opinion that we need both: training and education. But, we need to set up different curricula and different programs to do these separate jobs. Perhaps both cannot be done well in the same program or even at the same college or university. I am convinced that we need a much greater diversity of schools and programs in both training and education in tourism than we now have in this country.

So, in spite of the evident need for greater education, at all other levels as well as universities, administrators are not yet convinced that you and I exist, or that our services are important to society and to the economy.

POINT THREE—What can be done about this situation?

I would like to suggest that all of these are challenges rather than insurmountable issues—they do have solutions. Certainly, we, as educators, need to get out of the classroom and bring our administrators into the field to better understand what is going on in tourism. All of us now in education need greater contact with you to keep in touch with the real world. At the same time, I would like to take advantage of my position here on this platform to invite you to help us in this present-day tourism educational dilemma. Let me leave you with just a few suggestions:
First, I would ask you to visit your high school administrators and counselors. Invite them to your businesses or governmental offices. Find out what they are now doing to help guide young people into this fascinating and very rewarding field. Find out how you can assist them in making the needed changes.

Second, I would like to have you visit your universities and colleges. Get on their campuses and visit several department heads and deans. Again, invite them to your businesses. Tell them about this great field—how it works, who runs it and the need for better trained people in the future. Find out how you could assist them with leadership, interest and even money, if necessary. And, for those programs already in place, let the administrators know their efforts are appreciated.

Third, I would guess that every one of you belongs to one or several organizations. Even if they are not related to tourism, why not introduce to them the need for their support of more and better tourism education. Sponsor talks about tourism in Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and other local organizations. Encourage each one to set up a tax-deductible scholarship for a student to major in tourism. Already, the National Tour Association and its National Tour Foundation sponsors 20 scholarships a year for tourism majors in universities.

Fourth, a good way to help educators do a better job is for those of you in business to offer internships. We notice a dramatic difference in a student's motivation and interest in course work after getting some experience. The extra time it takes for you and your staff to do this is well worth the investment. Not all education can be done in the classroom. Disneyworld and many other attractions already provide internships for university students.

Fifth, if education in tourism is to move ahead, it needs more support from you on the research as well as the teaching side. Remember, professors do operate under the mandate of "publish or perish." Why not keep them busy with tourism research rather than studying some obscure or esoteric subject.

Sixth, I cannot emphasize enough the extension role of university education. Much of what I have said relates only to formal classroom education. But, this may not apply to you already in business except as you hire new graduates.

Extension provides many educational opportunities for all tourism interests—right now, on the job:
- to learn about new trends
- to learn new techniques
- to find new opportunities to tap new markets
- and to share successes and problems with others.

Extension offers many ways of doing this:
- conferences and seminars
- workshops
- specialized short courses
- publications.
Extension taps the many resources of the university and builds that very important and relevant linkage with those of you in the field.

But, to do this, Extension needs your help. University administrators are not always aware of the tremendous value of Extension, especially in the field of tourism.

And finally, these constructive steps for better tourism education may be difficult for you to do individually. One of the best mechanisms I know of is a STATE TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE. I am pleased to know that you already have one in Minnesota.

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Perhaps from these brief comments, you and I in the business and educational fields can develop a stronger partnership that will not only benefit tourism as a whole but also strengthen both business and education.
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