

Summary

This case study explored the training needs of those who operate bed and breakfast inns (B&Bs) in the United States, providing definitions of and explanations about bed and breakfast operations and describing a project that involved conducting a survey to attempt to determine the needs for training identified by a sample of bed and breakfast operators. Questions and concerns were raised about the challenges operators of bed and breakfast inns face to be able to organize and afford effective training opportunities.

Key words: bed and breakfast, training, marketing, innkeeping

Definitions

The following definitions are useful for understanding the case.

- **Bed and Breakfast:** This can be defined as formerly a single family dwelling usually with 2-5 rooms for rent; this owner-occupied establishment has an equally mixed use as a home and lodging establishment with lodging often superseding its use as a home.
- **Bed and Breakfast Inn:** This usually describes a small, owner occupied inn. The building's primary use is as a lodging operation with 4-20 rooms for rent. Breakfast is the only meal served and it is served only to overnight guests. The inn may host events such as weddings, small business meetings, etc.
- **Country Inn or Bed and Breakfast Hotel:** These establishments provide overnight lodging and meals, the owner or manager is actively involved in daily operations, is on site 24-hours a day, and the number of rooms ranges from 6 to 30. These inns usually serve at least one meal in addition to breakfast, and operate "restaurants" as well as overnight lodging accommodations. (Oregon Bed and Breakfast Guild, 2011).
- **Business plan:** A business plan helps an entrepreneur clarify his or her thoughts and ideas about opening a business and putting it in writing makes it more real. A typical business plan includes an executive summary of the business proposed, a business description, marketing strategies to be used, a competitive analysis of how one thinks the business will fare against its competitors, a design and development plan, operations and management plans, and financial components, including a cash flow statement and balance sheets (SBA, 2011).
- **Training:** Refers teaching connected to job-related skills that is timely and that will apply immediately (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2011).
- **Sustainability:** A current usage of the term, developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (2010) defines sustainability in the following manner as:

the satisfaction of basic economic, social, and security needs now and in the future without undermining the natural resource base and environmental quality on which life depends. From a business perspective, the goal of sustainability is to increase long-term shareholder and social value, while decreasing industry's use of materials and reducing negative impacts on the environment.

Common to both the public policy and business perspectives is recognition of the need to support a growing economy while reducing the social and economic costs of economic growth. Sustainable development can foster policies that integrate environmental, economic, and social values in decision making. From a business perspective, sustainable development favors an approach based on capturing system dynamics; building resilient and adaptive systems, anticipating and managing variability and risk; and earning a profit.

- **Marketing:** According to Philip Kotler (2011), author of marketing texts and a marketing consultant and speaker:

Marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Marketing identifies unfulfilled needs and desires. It defines, measures and quantifies the size of the identified market and the profit potential. It pinpoints which segments the company is capable of serving best and it designs and promotes the appropriate products and services.

Teaching and Learning Objectives

Below are the teaching and learning objectives of this case, followed by examples:

1. *Offer opportunities to understand and thereby explain training needs of B&B operators.*

While this study was limited to a small sample of respondents who belonged to a specific organization, training appears to be desired by B&B owners/operators and yet they are not unified in their needs. Results of this pilot study indicated that training in marketing and management might be of use to these industry professionals who may not have access to costly or lengthy training programs offered by organizations. The respondents in this study did not give the impression that they spend much time and energy on training, perhaps this issue to their busy work and personal lives, where they often live and work in the same place, their own small inn or bed and breakfast. Their websites appear to offer them opportunities to market their businesses and in particular the "green" initiatives that they practice. However, greater opportunities for training might

provide them with further insights into how to promote their businesses as unique lodging opportunities for a variety of guests.

2. Provide current information about a variety of training needs, using a survey of U.S. B&B operators as an example.

In the case, Table 2 identifies the training programs needed by those who operate B&Bs and again, the answers are varied, with marketing and management receiving the most responses. Very few operators (12) indicated that they used outside training sources, one noting that few certificates and programs were available, while others said that they attended workshops or sessions perhaps once a year.

3. Demonstrate an understanding of current training practices by identifying them in the case study and by providing further examples of their own.

Current training sessions offered to these B&B operators are presented in Table 1 in the case. As noted, answers were varied, with no one item receiving a large number of responses. Mentoring (with 11 responses) and service delivery (with 9 responses) received the most attention, with the other category, including training for internships also receiving consideration.

4. Stimulate discussion over the application of training for B&B operators in a variety of settings.

Answers will vary. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercises. The instructor might want to be sure to address the topic of how training might be perceived by B&B owner/operators. For example, do they think that owners see training as essential and do they perceive that training is worth the time, money, and effort that it takes to complete training?

5. Share definitions and describe applications of training for B&B operators in a variety of settings.

Answers will vary. Shared definitions help to focus the group. Definitions are provided in this teaching note and at the beginning of the case itself. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercises.

6. Identify themes in training for B&B operators.

From this study three key findings emerged. Each finding, unfortunately, illustrates a lack of connection between knowledge and practice related to marketing of B&B properties by B&B operators. The first finding is that the B&B operators are carrying out many "green" practices, but are not necessarily marketing these practices. Only nine respondents stated that they marketed their "green" practices through their website. This absence of marketing shows a lack of understanding between current general trends in "green" lodging and the B&B

operators' abilities to highlight their own "green" practices to sell their property, service, and philosophy.

In his study of B&B operators, Rogerson (2004) identified a lack of knowledge related to marketing in general. It is possible that B&B operators are conducting marketing practices more than they realize, yet they do not report them as such because without a general understanding of marketing principles these operators are not aware of true marketing activities. The results from this study support this finding in that many respondents reported using their websites, direct information, and brochures to sell the property; yet the sample cited training in the area of marketing as their number one training need.

Finally, Kline, Morrison, and St. John (2005) noted the need for marketing development and six years later operators still feel this is a need that has not been addressed by professional organizations or community partnerships. There appears to be a need for training in marketing and management among B&B operators. Given these gaps between knowledge and practice in the area of marketing and the desire for training related to marketing for B&B operators, recommendations for organizations that might have resources and personnel to develop and deliver this training as well as recommendations for ways that B&B operators might seek out this training follow.

7. Recommend ways and means to provide training for B&B operators. Several organizations have the resources needed to develop and deliver the training needed.

These organizations are each stakeholders in the B&B property and/or the economic development of the local community. B&B professional organizations (i.e. PAII) serve the needs of their members in many ways. These organizations, related specifically to the Bed and Breakfast profession, would do well to consider working toward developing specific training that will meet the needs of their members. Currently PAII offers an aspiring Innkeeper's course that highlights the operations associated with innkeeping. Marketing courses, green initiative courses, and human resource practices courses could not only be developed, but also delivered through these organizations as a means of professional development and meeting the needs of members.

Local community development organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce or tourism development authority, are other resources for B&B operators. Through service and support of their members, local development organizations work to bring economic growth to the local community. These services could include best practices workshops, a luncheon series, or featured speakers related to marketing a B&B business.

Finally, through a hospitality management or tourism department at a local university the development of marketing related or green practices internships is possible. This kind of program would provide valuable experience for the student and need specific “know how” for the operator. Additionally, there may be an outreach component to a university’s mission. If so, there may be an opportunity for the B&B operator to work with faculty members as a means of training.

While these organizations are potential resources for B&B operators, there are currently free resources available for B&B operators. The two examples provided below are specific for marketing training needs. These resources include training from the Small Business Administration and the American Marketing Association. The U.S. Small Business Administration, “dedicated to providing support to small businesses across the nation” (SBA) currently delivers free training related to opening a business, managing a business, and financing a business. There are also free podcasts available for download related to marketing a business and free online marketing courses available. One example is the “Marketing 101: Guide to Winning Customers” online course (SBA). While this may not be specific to B&B operations, it is a resource available to B&B operators where they can educate themselves in order to better understand what marketing is and effective practices.

The American Marketing Association also offers free instruction in marketing essentials. Their website includes a resources library where a visitor can find free E-newsletters, best practices articles, and podcasts. Again, these are not specific to B&B operations, but could be very useful in understanding marketing principles and current trends.

Lastly, it is recommended that B&B operators develop a local coalition. These coalitions could be developed in counties or regions that work together to promote tourism and therefore, the properties might have natural linkages based on their specific locations near attractions or businesses of interest to their guests. A suggestion to develop a coalition would be to identify regional lodging and tourism organizations that might help to bring operators in an area together and then start the coalition at a session at a meeting of the larger organization. With this team approach it may be easier to seek out and find the necessary training and development programs. It will also be more likely that the coalition would receive funding to support the cost associated with the development and delivery of training content and materials. In addition, the coalition might develop its own best practices exchange that would benefit each property as well as the local economy.

Suitability for Use

This case is suited for use by instructors and students in undergraduate lodging, introduction to hospitality and tourism, and hospitality and tourism marketing courses, in settings where the instructors wish to provide students with opportunities to develop an understanding of training and education issues and encourage them to think about and discuss issues critical to the accessibility and content of training and education for professionals, in this case, B&B operators.

Sources and Methods of Collecting Information for the Case

Information for this case was collected via a survey and observations and through reading the related literature and perusing related websites.

Teaching Approach and Suggested Sequence or Timeframe

Instructors may use this case in a variety of ways. These include using the case as:

1. an individual assignment
2. a group assignment
3. an essay item on an exam—perhaps as a take-home exam question with extended time to process the case and to research the answers to the questions
4. a class discussion exercise
5. a combination of individual and group assignment activity

The case could be assigned to read out of class and then a one-two hour in-class session could provide students with an opportunity to discuss and process the case carefully. This case leaves much out so as to inspire students to create products for training and educating B&B operators. The case can be used over several class sessions if students are required to complete the points for discussion prior to class and then come to class either face-to-face or online ready to discuss the varied topics and issues related to the case, such as need for training and education, ways to make training accessible, ways to deliver content and actual content of interest for B&B operators. As an individual assignment in a smaller class setting, students might be assigned the case to read and answer several or all of the discussion questions, followed by a class discussion and comparison of their answers. On an exam, students might be challenged to read and analyze the case by identifying the problem and analyzing the situation and then developing training and education plans for the B&B community. The related cases and recommended reading might be assigned as part of the background research on the case before a class discussion or as a contrast/comparison to the B&B case on an exam.

The following items provide instructors with questions and activities to guide their students' work with the case. At the end is Appendix A which offers a sample lesson plan for use of the case and additional teaching/learning activities to support the topic of B&B operations and training needs.

Questions to generate interest:

1. How would you define a B&B?
2. Have you ever stayed at a B&B? If so where and what was it like?
3. Have you ever thought about owning and operating a B&B? Why or why not?
4. What is training?
5. What is education?
6. Compare and contrast education and training and put this in context for B&B operators.
7. What kinds of sustainable practices, if any, have you noticed at tourism destinations, such as B&B operations of other lodging properties that you have visited?
8. What possible benefits do you think a B&B operator would reap due to training and education?
9. What problems or issues do you think a B&B operator's business might face as a result of a lack of effective training?
10. Can you think of any specific examples of B&Bs that have been adversely affected by a lack of training and/or education specific to the property and in terms of owning and operating a business in general? If so, provide examples of these.
11. How has the recent recession influenced operators of hospitality and tourism businesses, and specifically B&B operators?

Topics and Questions for Discussion:

1. *What are the major training needs expressed by the B&B operators in this case study?*

This study provided a brief look at the training needs of B&B owners in the United States and the use of and desire for "green" initiatives in their operations. Results indicate that there is much variety in terms of the needs of these small business operators/owners; however training in marketing and management appear to be areas of concerns expressed among the B&B operators in this pilot study. Although suggestions were made to B&B operators for organizations to contact to find training support, there is still a need to develop and deliver this training. These training programs, if developed and delivered, may assist B&B operators in promoting who they are and what they do, such as their "green" lodging initiatives, to more effectively

market and manage these unique often owner-operator lodging properties.

2. *Is there any additional information that you would like to have to further understand the needs of the B&B operators and if so, what is it and why do you want to know more about it?*

Answers may vary but might possibly include further information on training and education for B&B operators, as well as more information on training and education efforts for other sectors of the industry such as larger hotels and resorts. Students might also ask about the expansion of the economy through the growth of tourism, how this would effect the growth and maintenance of a healthy B&B sector and the issues that might arise from dependency on one particular industry like those seen in coastal and/or mountain communities, or seasonal attractions with a wide variance during the busy and slow seasons.

This pilot study was limited by its small scope in terms of numbers of respondents. It may be that a more representative sample would provide researchers with different conclusions in terms of the training needs of B&B operators. This study was of a very small number of B&B operators so that the results cannot be generalized to B&B operators as a whole. A larger survey and perhaps the use of more in-depth methods such as focus groups and interviews with B&B operators might offer further evidence of the needs these unique operators have for training. One avenue for future research would be to develop, deliver, and evaluate the training needed by B&B operators. This could be a collaborative project between B&B operators, academicians, marketing professionals, and community development professionals. Benefits of this kind of project could include the new knowledge of marketing concepts as well as resulting products from collaborative efforts. Additionally, researchers could focus on the green initiatives of B&B operators. A format for sharing best practices, access to resources, and cost-efficient practices could be developed and delivered.

3. *Compare and contrast the needs of these B&B operators with those found in your own community, other states or provinces, and other countries around the world.*

Answers vary and this question might be used most effectively to guide a two-part exercise—first, an out-of-class activity whereby students, either individually or in small groups of two or three, go out to the web and other sources to find information and then second as an in-class activity where they organize their findings and share and discuss them with the class.

4. *Select one of the topics concerning training for the B&B operators presented in the case and interview someone who operates a B&B in your own community who has knowledge of the topic/issue to find out where he or she believes this topic/issue is at the current time in your community and where it is headed in the future.*

Answers will vary. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercise in groups. In-class time could be used to develop questions and search the internet for relevant information so as to organize the interviews. The interviews and the write-up could be conducted outside of class.

5. *Discuss the major factors that you believe will influence the future of training for B&B operators.*

Answers will vary. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercise.

6. *Discuss the major factors that you believe will influence the future of marketing for B&B operators.*

Answers will vary. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercise.

7. *Develop a strategy for training for B&B operators that offers a cost-effective and yet worthwhile approach to providing much needed information in a variety of areas.*

To complete this exercise, research possible organizations and opportunities already available to B&B operators, explain the areas of training and/or education that you will focus on, develop your own strategies, and justify your choices.

Answers will vary. This could also be completed as a combination of an in-class and out-of-class exercise.

8. *Develop a strategy for B&B operators that offers a cost-effective and yet worthwhile approach to providing much needed assistance with marketing. To complete this exercise, research possible organizations and opportunities already available to B&B operators, develop your own strategies for marketing that they may use, and justify your choices.*

Possible plans of action for marketing might include:

- Increasing Internet marketing about the county and its tourism destinations
- Offer incentives for organizations to bring meetings and events to the area
- Offer incentives to businesses to meet sustainable

benchmarks

- Create a county-wide marketing plan (i.e. "Virginia is for Lovers" campaign)
- Increase target marketing to environmentally-friendly travelers
- Promote sustainable practices to travelers
- Invite community input into sustainability plans

9. *Conduct a SWOT analysis (an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of the strategy or strategies you developed in #7 and #8.*

Answers will vary, but will be related to the other items in this list. This item could be extended so that a particular B&B is used as an example and then students conduct a SWOT analysis of that B&B or another of their choice.

10. *What do you see as possible advantages and disadvantages of the strategies developed in # 7 and #8 and why?*

Answers will vary.

11. *How can you advise B&B operators to practice sustainability so that B&B operators can further reduce their carbon footprint?*

Answers will vary. However, some B&Bs have begun buying food and other supplies from local and organic sources, but integrating these practices into the organizations locally, nationally, and even internationally will reduce their carbon footprint further. Energy analyses are also in place at some facilities and implementing these procedures into the maintenance routines of the B&Bs can reduce costs while increasing sustainability. This will result in water, energy, and fuel savings. Also, communities working together to educate consumers about sustainability can help.

12. *What kinds of training products and services do you feel would be compatible with the sustainability efforts you developed in #11 and why?*

A good strategy will maintain or reduce current costs, increase revenue, and expand sustainable practices in the future. Costs affect profits, and profitability is the key to the growth of an industry. If the hospitality industry in an area –including lodging facilities such as B&Bs, restaurants, and parks are not making money, then the industry will lose momentum and give way to another one that brings in more revenue. Education about how sustainability can be of interest to tourists might be of help to B&B operators. This would provide exposure to the im-

portance of natural and heritage sites in the area.

13. *What barriers to implementing sustainable training and marketing practices might need to be overcome to make the efforts more feasible in other locations?*

As noted previously, budgetary issues are increasingly significant in the current economic situation in the U.S. and globally. In addition, continuing to gather public and private business support for the efforts toward sustainability takes much effort and time and competing issues take their toll as well. The balance between being good corporate citizens and making a profit continues to face operators in the hospitality and tourism industry.

14. *Research a specific B&B of your choice. Interview its operators and find out about their particular needs for training, including concerns they have about their marketing efforts and profitability.*

Answers will vary.

- a. As a class, develop questions that can be asked to learn about B&B training and educational needs through the interviews
- b. Go out of class and conduct the interviews, either individual or in small groups of two or three students
- c. Come back to class, share the interviews, and discuss the findings
(Note—in an online class—the “in-class” part can take place in a discussion board format)

15. *Create a business plan for a B&B operation of your own choosing.*

Answers will vary. This might be an effective service learning, community engagement project for students in higher level classes.

16. *Design a training program for B&B operators to address at least one topic discussed in the case study.*

Answers will vary, but again this will provide a win-win opportunity for students and B&B operators, allowing students to stretch themselves as facilitators and offering B&B operators economical training.

17. *As a future B&B operator what would be your strategy for obtaining the training you and your staff need for success when funds and access are limited?*

Answers will vary. Resources should be identified in the development of the strategy. This could be done in-class and the remainder of the assignment could be completed out-of-class.

18. *Examine a B&B association in your own region. Develop a cost effective means for developing and delivering training to its members.*

Answers will vary. Some states have multiple state-wide associations. This might be an effective service learning, community engagement project for students in higher level classes.

19. *What other lodging setting(s) might have some of the same challenges as B&B operators in terms of access and cost of training and professional development?*

Answers will vary. An examination of non-traditional lodging properties, such as independent lodging properties or boutique properties may assist student's in better understanding the challenges associated with access and cost of training.

20. *How would you collect information needed for making decisions regarding training? What specific information would you need to have in order to make informed decisions regarding training?*

Answers will vary. The need for accurate and reliable data in order to make informed decisions should be addressed. Methods of data collection as well as managerial decision making could be discussed as well.

21. *In the case, information was collected using an electronic survey. The authors noted their low response rate. How would you improve upon the information collected for your business?*

Answers will vary. Methods of data collection, sample, population, reliability, and generalizability can all be examined. This might be an effective introduction to surveys as a means of data collection.

22. *Would you use a survey to collect information for decision making? If so, how would you ensure you get useable data? How would you use the data you collected?*

Answers will vary. The need for accurate and reliable data in order to make informed decisions should be addressed. Methods of data collection as well as managerial decision making could be discussed as well. Again, this might be an effective introduction to surveys as a means of data collection.

Related Cases

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- White Stone Marketing (2011).—This organization has produced a variety of case studies on Bed and breakfast Inns—for example, Carmel Country Inn, Farmhouse Inn, Old Monterey Inn, etc. Retrieved 10/5/11 from http://www.whitestonemarketing.com/portfolio_casestudies.html.

Suggested Readings

- Kuehn, D., Hilchey, D., Vevers, D., Dunn, K.L., Lehman, P. (1998). Considerations for agritourism development. NY Sea Grant Program, Oswego, NY. Retrieved 10/5/11 from <http://nsgl.gso.uri.edu/nysgi/nysgig98001.pdf>.
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Appendix A:

Example Lesson Plan for: A Case Study of the Training Needs of Bed and Breakfast Operators

1. Set-up:

- A. Learning Outcomes: At the end of the lesson the student should be able to:
- Explain training and education needs of B&B operators.
 - Describe current information about a variety of training needs for B&B operators
 - Demonstrate an understanding of current training and education practices by identifying them in the case study and by providing further examples of their own.
 - Discuss the application of training and education

for B&B operators in a variety of settings.

- Define and describe applications of training and education for B&B operators in a variety of settings.
- Identify themes in training for B&B operators
- Recommend ways and means to provide training for B&B operators.

B. Suggested Task: Assign the case as reading outside of class and have the students come to class prepared to discuss the case as a class and in small groups.

C. Conditions: Set up the class so that students can easily work in small discussion groups and yet so that the entire class can come together as a large group. Provide a white board or black board if possible and Computer Internet access so as to be able to access additional resources.

D. Standard: Decide the standard prior to class and be sure to state the level of acceptable performance of the case assignment in terms of quantity, quality, time limitations, etc. (Total lesson time: 100 min. over 1 or 2 days)

- 2. Introduction:** Introduce the topic and case. Use an interest device (such as a story, humor). As an instructor, one might share an experience staying at a B&B or ask students about their experiences with B&Bs to get the class started. The instructor should also set the stage for the lesson by providing any special instructions about facilities, etc. (Time= 5 min)
- 3. Objectives:** See learning outcomes above. Help students to visualize clear goals, such as what will this learning help them to achieve? What will they be able to do in the future? Why are they spending time on the case? (Time= 3 min)
- 4. Case Assignment Requirements:** The instructor must decide what the student must do for the case and explain the requirements to the class. Specifically, how does the student know she/he has completed the requirements for the case correctly? The instructor will need to decide if student participation in discussion is enough or will students be expected to complete a written assignment about the case, etc. (Time= 2 min)
- 5. Instructional Outline:** The following possible lesson sequence could be used after the introduction:
 - A. Summarize Case: As a whole class exercise, begin by having students summarize the case and its major points.
 - Ask students first to summarize the case so that they enter into a dialogue about the case.

- Encourage students to define the issues in the case. Listing all the facts (or “knowns”) and “unknowns” can help students define the issues clearly.*
- Ask students questions to generate interest (see the list provided in the teaching note).
- Ask students what viable solutions would “look like”. This may help them brainstorm ideas.

*Source: Pennsylvania State University (n.d.). Using cases in teaching, Retrieved 6/14/12 from <http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/cases/>

B. Small group discussion: Divide the class into small groups and have the groups discuss the questions offered. Ask groups to assign a scribe to their groups to document the information generated by the groups.

- Have small groups continue the discussion about B&B operators and training needs.
- Have small groups brainstorm suggestions for B&B operators.
- Request that student groups each develop an action plan.

C. Class discussion: Come back together as a class and have groups share their answers to the questions and share overall ideas about the case.

D. Further small group activities: Have students get back into their small groups and participate in optional activities listed under #7 Teaching Resources below or develop a specific training program for B&B operators. Alternatively ask each group to come up with an action plan for how B&B operators can fulfill their training needs. Ask groups to assign a scribe to their groups to document the information generated by the groups. Students should develop a training outline and perhaps a marketing tool to help promote the program to other B&B operators.

E. Sharing: Have groups share their proposed programs with the class.

F. Wrap-Up: Class discussion about the future of training for B&Bs—including opportunities and obstacles and how to overcome them. (Total time for this section=65 min)

6. Follow-up: After completing the lesson on the case, perform reflection, review, and evaluation activities.

A. Reflection is an active process (the student must think) – have students do it in pairs, groups, and individually to reflect on the important points in the case.

B. Review can also be an activity, i.e. toss a nerf ball around,

the receiver of the ball then explains or lists what he or she thought was a major idea or concept in the case. The ball is then tossed to another...

C. Evaluation: Decide what format will be used to determine that the learning objectives have been met. These can be in the form of behavior, for example students can answer questions orally, and written assignments. The evaluation process must support the learning outcomes.

D. Retention and Transfer: How will you ensure that the lessons learned through the case will be applied in the future? Think about how to tie this lesson to future lessons and activities. (Time for this section=25 min)

7. Teaching Resources: The following resources may be used to supplement this case as a teaching tool. These resources may extend the length of the lesson or may be assigned as homework in preparation for use in addition to the case.

A. Possible activities to use in small groups:

1. B&B Issues Activity: B&B operators may encounter problems that are somewhat unique to the small scale of their operations. They may need training to help them deal with these issues. Read the list of common problems that B&B hosts encounter and ask students to figure out how they can help the B&B operators resolve these issues through training. Questions of the students are:

- How would you help the B&B operators deal with these problems?
- What kind of training might you offer to the B&B operators and why?
- How would you conduct the training and why?
- How will you ensure that the training will be useful?

Common Problems in Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs)*

A well-run Bed and Breakfast (B&B) should experience limited problems. However, it is useful to be prepared for problems that may occur, such as the following:

- guest complaints
- no-shows—guests who do not arrive
- over-bookings
- guests who do not accept their accommodation
- late and early arrivals
- how to deal with guests who ignore your policies
- damage to, or loss of, your property and

possessions

- guests' have special and sometimes unique dietary requirements
- lack of knowledge about operating procedures such as:
- Accounting and finances, cooking, facility management and operation (such as swimming pools, hot tubs, etc.), food safety, health and sanitation, licensing, guest service, zoning, parking.

*Sources: Broomfield, A. (n.d.). Issues with Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Retrieved 6/13/12 from <http://www.ideamarketers.com/?articleid=3070587>

Common Problems in Bed and Breakfasts (B&Bs) (n.d.). Retrieved 6/12/12 from <http://www.accommodationknowhow.co.uk/running-your-business/running-your-b-and-b-guest-house/common-problems-in-bed-and-breakfasts-b-bs>

2. Activity using B&B reviews or other scenarios: The following is a review of a B&B. It can be used as a discussion item for a large group discussion or students can work in small groups. Alternatively, the instructor can ask students to find B&B reviews online to use for this activity. The scenario (or other scenarios that students find online) could also be used as the basis of a role play. One or two students could play the role of the innkeepers and the other student or students could play the role of themselves as consultants who will help to offer solutions through training. Suppose that this is the review that a B&B received and now the owners have come to the students as authorities on hospitality management to provide them with suggestions for how to address the concerns expressed in this review.

B&B review*

"When we got to B&B the innkeeper who met us was very uncommunicative. He barely spoke to us upon arrival and when we asked to have a bottle of wine in our room, he said that he could not offer that as it is too difficult and costly to get a license for serving wine. Although we arrived later in the evening than we had planned to, we expected a better welcome. The inn was in need of help, too. It was winter and apparently the innkeeper forgot to put salt or sand down on the driveway and it was very slippery and we almost fell and hurt ourselves. The bed was very uncomfortable because the bedframe seemed to be a bit broken. The bed was not level and appeared to be propped up by books in one corner. The private hot tub on the deck outside our room (which is why we booked a room

at this inn) would only fill half full with hot water before the water turned cold. Therefore, we could not soak in the hot tub and that was a huge disappointment. In addition, although we were going skiing in the morning, the innkeepers were not flexible about our breakfast time. On the positive side the breakfast was delicious and the view of the nearby mountains was lovely. However, next time we will try to find innkeepers who are willing to give us better service and who take better care of their property."

*Source: Adapted from Trip advisor (2011). Lotsa problems. http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g41297-d118374-r115583540-Haley_Farm_Bed_and_Breakfast_and_Retreat_Center-Oakland_Garrett_County_Maryland.html

B. Additional resources:

American Bed and Breakfast Association: <http://abba.com/>

Bed & Breakfast Association (of the United Kingdom): <http://www.bandbassociation.org/>

Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII): <http://www.innkeeping.org/>