

Providing Education and Training in Hospitality and Tourism Management Under Challenging Conditions and against Educational Traditions and Bureaucracies: A case study of Western Hospitality Institute (WHI)

Summary

Jamaican educational opportunities present challenges for the average low-income student, due to the requirement that students must be admitted to higher education institutions with the Caribbean Examination Council qualification (CXC). Due to the issues surrounding the CXC, the Western Hospitality Institute (WHI) was created to meet the growing demands for a cadre of hospitality employees and meet CXC challenges. The focus in this case is on Western Hospitality Institute (WHI) and how it has overcome barriers, challenges, shattered glass-ceilings, and broken traditions to provide students in Jamaica, interested in areas of hospitality access to tertiary level education. The case depicts the historical developments and the challenges faced by its founder, Dr. Cecil Cornwell. Despite the odds, WHI has been successful and is challenged to sustain the Institute for many years to come.

Teaching Objectives

The objectives of the case are to:

- Provide the scenario of the development and operation of Western Hospitality Institute (WHI) operating in Jamaica, with the objective to meet industry needs and meet the challenges of accreditation.
- Describe and review the developmental steps taken to become the Western Hospitality Institute.
- Evaluate the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats of WHI.
- Assess the challenges WHI had to overcome to develop programs to meet the needs of aspiring students who lacked required credentials to attend a public institution of higher learning in Jamaica.
- Assess and make predictions for future growth and development of WHI and determine its sustainability for the long term.
- Determine what major changes, if any, WHI should consider to position itself for future growth, retention, and continued success.

Case Analysis

This case can be used for classes related to Entrepreneurship and Business Development and for topics of sustainability of the hospitality industry.

Western Hospitality Institute (WHI) was planned and developed to meet the challenges of students who did not possess the Caribbean Examination Council qualification (CXC). WHI started as a private institution, governed by a Board of Directors. The school initially focused on widening the quality, scope and depth of WHI and programs that built academic bridges and opportunities for students to excel. The

program was also designed to provide a cadre of employees for the growing tourism industry, especially Montego Bay, Jamaica.

WHI, created 25 years ago was opened as a practical training school. The Institute was founded in September 1988 as an important link in Montego Bay and its environs. It opened as the Western School of Cake Decorating, Pastry Making and International Cooking. The name was changed to Western Catering School and now its name is Western Hospitality Institute. The major idea was to offer individuals working in the industry, small business owners, as well as homemakers with baking and pastry skills training. Its main focus was on developing a cadre of students, who lacked the skills to enter a culinary or hospitality program or a Jamaican public college or university, but had great potential and drives to succeed.

WHI graduates were allowed to compete for scholarships to international institutions such as George Brown College in Canada and Hocking Technical College in Nelsonville, Ohio. It is known that the students who completed the WHI Programs have excelled as students enrolled in higher education. The WHI Brand was formed, based on the successes of its graduates.

There are specific guidelines and processes that must be adhered to. Western Hospitality Institute as a private institution functions in a different way because of the established goal, mission, and enrollment requirements of the institution. The institution's programs and policies are designed and developed to facilitate students' transition from high school and the hospitality industry without the necessary requirements to enter public institutions.

At the inception of the institution, students were allowed to enroll and complete their program of study without fulfilling requirements that are necessary to gain a place in the public/government institutions. As a result, the institution attracted students who did not have the necessary pre-requisites to enter tertiary institutions. This type of structure provided great benefit to some individuals, as fulfilling the requirements necessary for public institutions is one less thing they had to worry about. In addition, some students embraced the institution because of the scholarship opportunities, as well as the opportunities they received to transfer credits from WHI to international universities and colleges.

Maintaining sustainability of WHI emerged as strategic changes emanated. The Board of Directors felt that seeking accreditation to increase students' access to other tertiary institutions and increase options for students. The organizer sought and applied for accreditation through the University Council of Jamaica. It was a difficult process. After many attempts and adjustments (change in acceptance requirements and

new admission requirements), WHI was accredited. One change was that students could not enter the degree programs without the CXC. To meet that challenge the director created matriculation programs within the institution. The students could enter the degree programs if they maintained an average grade of B in the certificate or diploma program. The director also applied to the Ministry of Education to offer the Career Advancement Program (CAP). It was approved, thus providing another opportunity for students to pursue bachelor degrees.

WHI also has developed partnerships with other institutions of higher education and hospitality entities.

The success of WHI rests with the growth and success rate of students. The enrollment has grown from a few to 500 over the 25 years of operation. Teaching styles are varied to meet the needs of students. The rate of achievement consists of -80%-pursue careers in the fields studied; -20%- pursue higher education endeavors and 20%- become entrepreneurs.

WHI has celebrated 25 years, given the challenges and issues of operation. New challenges are developing as Jamaica seeks to broaden and design rigor for tertiary education. While WHI has the approval for operation, it will have additional challenges to address the increased rigor imposed for schools and stringent qualifications for admission into tertiary institutions.

Assigned Case Questions

1. Analyze and describe the issues faced by WHI director in developing a school in Jamaica.

ANS. The issue was mainly the admission requirements. Students must have passed the CXC to be admitted. Organizing a school to allow students to earn higher certificates and degrees beyond high school was unthinkable. The organizer had to design strategic ways to offer programs without the requirements, while, providing quality education.

2. What was the motivation to start the Western School of Cake Decorating?

ANS. To increase opportunities for persons interested in the hospitality industry and develop a pool of qualified candidates for employment.

3. Develop a timeline of events, showing development and growth of WHI.

ANS. See case and develop a timeline. Use dates and list the events in chronological order.

4. Describe how students are recruited for WHI.

ANS. Students are recruited by 'word of mouth', WHI website, local advertisements, through public and private grade and high schools.

5. Explain why the admission requirements were changed and how the Board of Directors met the challenge.

ANS. The Admission requirements were changed to meet the

competencies of the CXC, so a format was put in place to assist students to move from one level to another.

6. Explain why accreditation was a strategic option for WHI.
ANS. Accreditation was a strategic option for WHI because the owner wanted to develop a quality program that could compete with any other tertiary institution in Jamaica and other countries. It also meant that student could use credits earned at WHI to access other tertiary institutions.
7. Accreditation meant that it was a recognized school, producing qualified graduates for the industry.
As the need for education increases, is it possible that the government institutions can do away with the bureaucracy and function as private institutions that do not require certain specific assignments?
ANS. As long as Jamaica stays with the British system, the bureaucracy will remain for all tertiary Institutions in Jamaica.
8. Describe the different types of educational programs offered by WHI and what type of career would be available to individual who may be interested in the programs?
ANS. Participants can earn certificated in all areas of baking, food service management, and room division management as well as they may earn associate/bachelor degrees in hospitality and food services management.
9. Looking towards the future, how can WHI again tweak the educational offerings to accommodate a changing society and educational reform?
ANS. WHI must assess the issues, trends and requirements and change based on industry and governmental needs and requirements.
10. Focusing on the future, should WHI consider becoming a public tertiary institution in order to receive public funds and become more financially viable?
ANS. It would be a viable option if WHI could receive funds as a public institution. Perhaps the programs could be structured as a public/private institution, where certain programs could operate from a public nature and others as private. This would take some creative thought and innovation.
Also, if WHI were to become private, individuals without the CXC's who depend on the Institution would no longer have that option.
11. Should WHI develop programs to complement WHI, such as Sports Tourism Management, Entertainment Management? Explain how WHI can use its current structure to develop such programs?

ANS. WHI should plan to offer other programs, such as Sports Tourism Management, Entertainment Management in order to sustain operations. The emerging trend is development of Sports arenas to sponsor regional, national and international tourna-

ments. This would be a great marriage between hospitality and Sports Tourism, as well as Entertainment Management.

12. Review ACPHA's accreditation standards. What would WHI need to do to seek ACPHA's accreditation?

ANS. Go to the ACPHA's website. www.acpha.edu

13. Compare the standards to Jamaica's standards, based on what is included in case. How could WHI benefit by seeking International (eg. ACPHA's) accreditation?
14. Based on the financial reports included, what can WHI do to increase its cash flow? Conduct some ratio analysis (Revenue to Profits, Cost to Revenue).
15. Design a strategic plan for WHI for sustainability. (Master's Degree Level)
16. The history of WHI existence as an organization was to equip educationally marginalized students with the ability to become better qualified in terms of their academic and professional development. However, WHI has changed some of its acceptance requirements; from an organizational behavior perspective, how will this affect the organization in terms of attracting students, its competitiveness, building financial sustainability, and long-term viability?]

ANS: Students may use Porter's Five Forces model to assess WHI's situation based on its strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The findings should be used to develop a strategic plan that will enhance and support the institution long-term existence. The plan should be creative and innovative, with ideas of how it can be duplicated in developing and developed countries.

Target Audience

While the case is about Jamaica, it can be employed in other countries worldwide, based on geographic and demographic conditions. The US is known for the many opportunities for persons who want to receive an education, who meet the admission requirements. Many individuals do not meet the requirements and enter higher education as provisional students. Programs may be designed, based on WHI for individuals who do not possess the qualifications and funds to enroll.

The case is relevant to students in hospitality and tourism because Western Hospitality Institute is a school which produces hospitality professionals. Upper level undergraduate hospitality and other senior students enrolled in courses such as strategic planning; international business and graduate courses are the key target audiences. An analysis of the case study would allow students to assess curriculum design and development strategies, as well as, methods used to make the program successful. Also, students could analyze and evaluate whether WHI has managed to or continue to meet its goals and objectives. Budgetary analysis from a business perspective could also reveal costs of operations, the level of available resources that are employed,

and how these resources could be better utilized.

In addition, the case study can serve as a valuable foundation for undergraduates and graduates to analyze the evolution of international hospitality programs and the accreditation process. Students will have the ability to evaluate external opportunities and threats associated with developing a respectful hospitality program. Students will also be able to recognize internal strengths and weaknesses associated with other hospitality programs theories of engagement and experiential learning. Lastly students will have the ability to design plans that will set a solid foundation for future hospitality programs in the US and worldwide

Teaching Plan

Provide the case for students and emphasize the case is about beating the odds to provide access to education in Jamaica, as well as preparing students for employment in the top industry.

Provide the objectives and questions and include the following major topics:

- Access to education for all and the CXC. Determine the employment opportunities for the future of Jamaica's tourism industry.
- Assess the admission requirements without CXC Certificates, Diploma, Associate Degree, and Bachelor Degree requirements. Compare the CXC with the required SAT/ACT for the United States of America.
- Assess the technical versus vocational skills needed for Jamaica's Tourism Industry.
- Design a matriculation model to suit bachelor and master degree students.
- Assess the process of accreditation by the Jamaican systems-University Council of Jamaica, Ministry of Education. Compare Jamaica's model with the US models of accreditation (ACPHA).
- Assess the option of becoming a public institution and the impact it would now have on the educational landscape of Jamaica.
- Pose a challenge to students: Is the CXC a benefit to the success of hospitality and tourism management students?
- Develop a SWOT analysis to identify, discuss, and analyze WHI strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The discussion should focus on the nature and problems of the institution's business-level and corporate strategy as well as its structure and control systems.
- Given the guidelines in Appendix 1, develop a proposed 5-year budget for operation and sustainability.

Wrap-Up Points

- Focus on how WHI can increase its sustainability, while serving the needs of its students and providing a cadre of qualified employees.

- Focus on how WHI can become a global company with emphasis on providing an education for all, regardless of past educational experiences.
- Focus on how Jamaican's educational policies help or hinder growth and development.
- Focus on the benefits to consumers/clients and the public being served by an accredited organization.
- Focus on overcoming future educational barriers for the benefit of Jamaica's economic growth and development. Discuss the benefits of seeking ACPHA's accreditation.
- Recommend strategies WHI can take to include Sports Tourism Management and Entertainment Management.