

Change and Innovation

The Way Forward in Tourism

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Meanwhile, Marie Louise Agius, Head of Diversity, Learning and Development at HSBC Malta, presented a company-specific case study on how HSBC have implemented a Diversity Policy and the implications which may arise from such a policy.

Providing a creative and innovative product would surely be one of the best practices which could possibly lead to attract more quality tourists to the islands. The seminar “Creative Thinking to Develop Innovative Products in Tourism” provided an insight into the creation of successful innovative tourism products. Francesca Balzan, Curator, shared her experience in transforming Palazzo Falson into a living museum, adopting a range of exciting concepts to attract various audiences, thereby keeping clients interested and returning. Frederik Leloup, founder and Managing Director of Sailing Team and CEO of Carbon Challenge Academy, used his experiences to emphasise the need to think outside the box in order to develop innovative tourism products. The concept of Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats served as a foundation for an open forum facilitated by Joe Woods, Manager of World Centre for New Thinking (WCNT), focusing on “Creating an Innovative Product in view of climate change awareness”.

Having a quality product requires good marketing techniques. Hence, the third innovation seminar dealt

The year 2009, designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, aims to exploit and promote creative and innovative approaches and initiatives in different domains of human activity at all levels. In this regard, the MTA’s Industry HR Development unit has been on the forefront in leading a number of seminars supporting creativity and innovation. Acting as a support for continuous professional development of human resources in tourism, these well-attended and well-received seminars aimed to provide managers and key people of tourism establishments with the tools to take an innovative approach within their work environment.

“There is a need for skills and competencies that enable people to embrace ‘change’ as an ‘opportunity’ and to be open to new ideas in a culturally diverse, knowledge-based society”. This was stated by the Chief Executive of the Malta Tourism Authority, Josef Formosa Gauci, while addressing one of the seminars.

The first seminar focused on “Creative Thinking to Address HR Challenges in Tourism”. Keynote speaker Enda Larkin, Director of Hospitality and Tourism Specialists (HTC) Consulting stressed that “in the challenging times now facing our industry the need for engaged employees has never been greater”.



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with “Marketing Tourism Products and Services Creatively”. Adrian Said, a Director of EMCS Ltd, highlighted the critical issue of branding, particularly destination branding. A ‘product positioning’ strategy was deemed fundamental in order to sustain competitiveness as ‘the times they are a-changing’. Accordingly, Dr Jim Hamill, Reader in e-Marketing at the Department of Marketing, University of Strathclyde, enquired into the recent buzz word of Tourism 2.0 explaining its key features and applications. This is due to the fact that “Web 2.0 heralds the beginning of the end of the ‘read only, tell them how good we are’ tourism website; the beginning of the end of traditional ‘push’ marketing strategies....and of destination brand...In a Web 2.0 environment, the brand becomes the customer experience of the brand”.



As Profs Edward de Bono states “Opportunity ideas do not lie around waiting to be discovered. Such ideas need to be produced”. Certainly, innovation is the way forward and if we really want our Maltese tourism product to stand out it is time to think outside the box and create an innovative product. If we wait for opportunities to occur, we’ll simply be part of the crowd.



**European Social Fund (ESF)
2.11 ‘Developing Leaders
for Change and Innovation
in Tourism’**

In 2009, the MTA will be launching a €4 million EU-funded project designed to up-skill and certify over 1,200 top, middle and supervisory management participants in sectors contributing directly or indirectly to tourism. This was announced by Joe Tanti, Head of Industry HR Development at a concluding seminar. The programme aims to increase competence levels, fill training gaps, and introduce and conduct a Continuous Professional Development Programme (CPD) for senior managers in the tourism

industry. It also enables participants to deal with best practice in the tourism industry through overseas placements and benchmarking. The programme will also strive to increase competence levels and introduce a Continuous Professional Development Programme for assistant line and supervisory managers. This will be conducted in a practical way that will enable them to train, monitor and coach lower level employees more professionally and effectively.



Two studies will also be commissioned to forecast future employment opportunities and future training needs in various sectors of the tourism industry including extending beyond the traditional accommodation, catering and travel sectors.

Individuals in top, middle and supervisory management positions interested in participating in the above-mentioned training programmes are invited to contact Karl Grech (Project Leader) / Sarah Faith Azzopardi (Project Executive) by email: karl.grech@visitmalta.com or sarah-faith.azzopardi@visitmalta.com or calling 22915126/4.