

AN EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGIES BEING USED BY
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

By

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ABSTRACT

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A recognized phenomenon is the drop in the number of students attending college over the next decade and in turn, a decline in the number of students enrolling in Hospitality and Tourism programs. These circumstances are due in large part to demographic factors and the changing job market. On the other hand, there is a growing need for professionals in the Hospitality and Tourism industry. This “catch twenty-two” means that Hospitality and Tourism programs will have to work harder and make more intelligent choices when it comes to recruiting students. Careful planning and practical marketing strategies can help them to achieve their goals.

This study outlines the strategies currently being used by Hospitality and Tourism educators to market their programs, and evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies as perceived by the educators and in relation to recognized marketing strategies. Based on a literature review and relevant findings from the study, several recommendations are given for Hospitality and Tourism educators on how they can more successfully market their programs to prospective students. Keywords: Recruitment, marketing, enrollment, college selection, Hospitality and Tourism programs

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality and Tourism programs all around the United States are facing dramatic declines in the number of students enrolling in their programs. Increasing competition between programs, budget cuts, and a rapidly expanding hospitality industry create a greater need for effective marketing strategies that will draw students to hospitality and tourism programs.

Need for the Study

The situation will have an important impact on the hospitality and tourism programs themselves—upon the quality and size of the program—but will also have an impact on the hospitality industry as the number and level of expertise of the students entering the field decreases. Carefully planned and implemented marketing strategies can play a vital role in helping hospitality programs to reverse the trend and draw larger numbers of qualified students to their programs.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify and evaluate the marketing strategies being used by U.S. Hospitality and Tourism programs in order to help them become more effective in attracting students.

Research Objectives

1. Identify the marketing strategies utilized by Hospitality and Tourism programs within the United States.
2. Analyze the effectiveness of the marketing strategies being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs within the United States.
3. Increase the information available to Hospitality and Tourism programs to help them recruit students into their programs.

Benefits of the Study

The study will benefit Hospitality and Tourism educators who wish to market their programs in several ways:

1. Hospitality and Tourism programs will see a better return on investment for their marketing expenditures.
2. A greater number of students who are qualified will be drawn to the program.

3. Educators will have more information on which to base their marketing decisions.
4. Retention rates of current students will be increased.
5. More money will be generated to put back into the recruitment and retention of students.
6. More money will be available for quality teaching programs and new technology.

(Poynter 1993)

Definition of Terms

Advertising: Any form of nonpersonal communication by a marketer to inform, educate, or persuade members of target audiences (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Enrollment Management: A process or an activity that influences the size, the shape, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment, and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid. In addition, the process exerts a significant influence on academic advising, the institutional research agenda, orientation, retention studies, and student services (Hossler 1986).

Exchange: The act of obtaining a desired product or benefit from someone by offering something in return. The institution offers goods, services or benefits to its markets, and receives needed resources in return—goods, services, students, volunteers, money, time and energy (Kotler and Fox 1985).

Information search: The stage of the buyer decision process in which the consumer is aroused to search for more information; the consumer may simply have heightened attention or may go into active information search (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Internal marketing: Marketing directed towards employees in the organization (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Marketing: Working with markets to bring about exchanges for satisfying human needs and wants (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Marketing information system (MIS): People, equipment and procedures to gather, sort, analyze, evaluate and distribute as needed, timely and accurate information to marketing decision makers (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Marketing management: The analysis, planning, implementation, and control of programs designed to create, build, and maintain beneficial exchanges with target buyers for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Marketing mix: Includes product, price, promotion, and place (Kotler, Bowen and Makens 1996).

Market segmentation: The process of dividing a market into different groups in which all customers share relevant characteristics that distinguish them from customers in other segments (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Personal communications: Direct communications between marketers and one or more customers that allow two-way dialog (including face-to-face conversations, phone calls, and email) (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Positioning: A firm's use of marketing tools to create a clear, distinctive and desirable image in the minds of target customers, relative to competing [providers] (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Relationship marketing: Activities aimed at developing long-term, cost-effective links between an organization and its customers for the mutual benefit of both parties (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The “golden era” of college-enrollment that took place for college admissions between the 1940s and 60s is long since over (Absher and Crawford 1996; Rienrth 1999; Spiegler 1998). Since the late 1970s the number of students choosing to attend college has declined drastically, making it a “buyer’s market” (Absher and Crawford 1996; Spiegler 1998).

The decline being faced by colleges and universities around the United States has also been reflected in the enrollments of Hospitality and Tourism programs. Schools around the United States are facing declines in large amounts from as little as fifteen years ago (Bergquist, interview, 2001; Davies, interview, 2001; Van Loernen, interview, 2001; Josiam, interview, 2001). The median enrollments of hospitality programs in 1990-91 of 300 had dropped to 250 in 1992-93 (Bloomquist 1998). For example, the enrollments in the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout reached peak levels at 1400, but had dropped to less than 350 by 2001 (Bergquist, interview, 2001; Van Loernen, interview, 2001; Josiam, interview, 2001). Even big schools like the University of Massachusetts-Amherst have experienced the decline; Josiam speculates that the numbers have dropped from about 1200-1300 in 1985-87 down to about 400-500 fifteen years later (interview, 2001).

Schools react to the decline

Many colleges have taken aggressive steps to try and deal with the problem, such as paying close attention to enrollment trends, cultivating an increased awareness of the needs and desires of the changing market, and becoming much more proactive in their efforts to attract students (Paulsen 1990; Barton 1978). Some state schools have been closed, budgets and financial aid have been cut, and administrative measures taken to try and “re-coop” some of the losses experienced (Rienrth 1999; Paulsen 1990).

Bloomquist predicts that several Hospitality programs will be closed or absorbed into other disciplines as their numbers continue to decrease (1994). Hospitality and Tourism programs must become more and more competitive, rethink their image, and take steps to make their program a desired commodity in an era of “reduced enrollments, budget deficits, retrenchment, and institutional closings” (Paulsen 1990).

Factors behind the decline

Lower birth rates has historically been blamed for the decline of all college enrollments in general (Spiegler 1998; College Board 1980). Another significant factor for the decline is an extremely healthy economy (Bergquist, interview, 2001; Davies, interview, 2001; Holland, interview, 2001; Van Loernen, interview, 2001; Josiam 2001). Lower value is being placed on a college education for many youth because an increased demand for skilled workers has drawn many students directly into the work force (Bergquist, interview, 2001; Davies, interview, 2001). Decreased government funding (Driscoll 1998) means that less money will be available to support the students who do enroll in college and will also cause programs to see budget cutbacks as necessary for survival. Less money being available will also mean that schools will have to work harder to appropriate funds to market their programs which will, in turn, serve to further exacerbate the problem.

Several factors were cited as contributing specifically to the decline in Hospitality and Tourism programs. One is a need for more specialized degrees (Holland, interview, 2001; Van Loernen, interview, 2001). Another is perceptions of the hospitality industry itself as being difficult and stressful (Bergquist, interview, 2001; Davies, interview, 2001).

The situation may also be due in part to increased competition between programs for qualified students. Several authors note a significant growth in number of Hospitality programs being offered (Rappole 2000; Riegel 1999; Bergquist, interview, 2001). For example, in the early 1970s, only about 40 hospitality programs existed, but by 1997 this number had grown to 149 (Riegel 1999). In 1999, there were approximately 170 hospitality programs in existence (Riegel 1999) and the number of programs is projected to increase at a steady rate (Rappole 2000).

The growth of Hospitality and Tourism education programs are a reflection of the growth of the industry (Riegel 1999). The demand within the Hospitality industry for managers whose background includes formal education is growing, and will continue to increase as national, multinational, and global corporations increasingly take over ownership within the industry (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996; Riegel 1999).

Marketing as a solution

Effective marketing will help to reverse the trend of declining enrollments by re-creating the institution's image and providing the ability to evaluate present marketing efforts (Weirick 1978).

Marketing will also help an institution to communicate with their target markets and gain a competitive edge (Beder 1986; Poynter 1993). Hospitality and Tourism programs will see a better return on investment for their marketing expenses and more money will be available for quality teaching programs or new technology (Poynter 1993). More money will also be generated to put back into the recruitment and retention of students who are currently in the program (Poynter 1993). The retention rates of current students will be increased, and a greater number of qualified students will be drawn to the program (Poynter 1993).

Marketing defined

Marketing is a philosophy, a paradigm that shapes the way in which an organization or institution responds to its environment in order to provide for customer needs. In return the institution receives resources to complete its objectives and continue providing its services to the customer. Kotler, Bowen, and Makens describe marketing as “a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging products and value with others” (1996: 8). It is more than just a one-time action, a new gimmick or a hyped-up sales promotion. Marketing is rather based on a set of established principles (Majaro 1993; Magrath 1988; Beder 1986). These principles must permeate the entire institution (Majaro 1993; Magrath 1988; Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996; Beder 1986) and be a part of the institution’s very culture and its “shared values system” (Majaro 1993: 3).

One of the most important marketing principles is a focus on the customer (Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996; Gregory and Fenich 1994), or in this case, upon the various publics of an institution, including the students, faculty, donors and other stakeholders. This does not mean that an institution neglects its own needs or that it follows the fads of the moment in order to please the students or a particular group of stakeholders, but that it assesses the trends in order to provide in the best way for the students, the faculty, and the institution as a whole. The university must find a balance between “what the students want” and what will be best in the long run (Driscoll 1998), such as preparing them for “productive” activity and “civic responsibility” (Kotler and Fox 1985:10). This concept is a “societal marketing orientation” which says that while an institution may work very hard to satisfy the needs and desires of its students, it will also take into account “society’s well-being and long-term interests,” (Kotler

and Fox 1985: 11; Driscoll 1998) as well as its own (Kotler and Fox 1985; Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996).

Another key concept of marketing is the use of the marketing mix—the right blend of program design, pricing communication and distribution (Kotler and Fox 1985). Program design will focus on providing the right benefits to the target market—benefits that will meet their needs and desires—and that the institution can feasibly provide while meeting its own objectives and values (Kotler and Fox 1985). Pricing is established in correlation with the costs the institution incurs to provide its services and with the value place on its programs by the market (Kotler and Fox 1985). The target market must be willing and able to pay the price established by the institution.

Communications are the tools and channels by which the target market is made aware of the services available and the benefits to be received by use of the services (Kotler and Fox 1985). Distribution for most institutions has traditionally occurred from a centralized location, but the areas of distribution by colleges and universities are being enlarged to include programs over a wide geographic area by use of the Internet, outreach programs and distance-learning tools.

Marketing Communications

Before any formal marketing takes place, objectives must be set for what the institution wishes to communicate and who their target audience should be (Hiam 1997). For example, the institution will wish to increase awareness and stimulate the interest of high school students, students who would like to transfer, nontraditional learners, or people already within the industry who wish to gain formal education (Lovelock and Wright 1999). Or an institution's goal may be to emphasize the special strengths and benefits of their institution to stimulate demand in low-demand periods (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Marketing communication may perform several tasks, such as informing and educating prospective students about what a particular college has to offer, persuading target markets that the institution offers the best solution for their needs, or reminding students of the school and motivating them to act. It may also help the university to maintain contact with current students or provide them with information on how to obtain the best results from what the college offers (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

There are several steps to creating an effective communications mix:

1. Identify the target audience.

2. Determine the response sought.
3. Choose a message.
4. Choose the media through which to send the message.
5. Select the message source.
6. Collect feedback.

(Kotler, Bowen, and Makens 1996).

Strategies and Tools

Some of the most important and effective marketing strategies seem to fall into two general categories: internal considerations and external measures (Bush 1998). Internal considerations are those which focus upon activities within the school which may be used to boost enrollment or which emphasize the retention of current students, while external measures are those which involve marketing the college (or particular department) to prospective students. Colleges may approach marketing from these two perspectives: the college can adjust itself to fit the needs and desires of the market, or it can put forth efforts to recruit students whose needs and desires fit what the college can offer (Paulsen 1990).

Internal Marketing Strategies

One of the most common internal marketing methods adopted by universities to try and increase enrollment is to revise the curriculum being used. The aim to produce a curriculum that will be more practical in nature, or “applied” (Rienerth 1999), in order to better fit the needs and desires of the current market. This seems to be in reaction to changes in the economy; when a recession hits, the number of job market opportunities available for those who choose not to attend college are greatly lessened, while those opportunities available to college graduates are not affected nearly so strongly. Therefore, the opportunities available to college graduates appear much more promising and the ensuing enrollment trends favor schools who feature “professional” or vocational curriculum (Paulsen 1990). In fact, in a recent survey by Victoria Bush, assistant professor in the Department of Management and Marketing (College of Business) at the University of Mississippi, of business schools located in the southern central region of the United States, 88% of responding colleges had revised curriculum within the past five years (1998).

It is an interesting paradox, as Bush is careful to point out, that even the strategies most commonly used by universities may not be perceived as being the most effective in drawing in students (1998). This

is highlighted by Rienerth's study on East Carolina University (ECU) and Appalachian State University (ASU): over eight years, the number of graduates at ECU increased only "slowly" even with a new emphasis on "applied" curriculum (1999).

Another internal strategy being undertaken by many schools (in various forms) is the evaluation of the effectiveness of departments within the university. This approach often helps designate the amount of resources and funds that will be allocated to the department and may even determine whether the department itself should be retained (Rienerth 1999). The actual implementation of this method may be exit surveys completed by graduating seniors, alumni surveys, or studies done to determine the effectiveness of internships or special programs offered by through the university (Rienerth 1999).

Technological innovations, such as updated computer equipment or labs, distance learning equipment and facilities, or multimedia in the classroom, are seen by many universities as extremely valuable to replenishing the numbers of enrolled students, but the actual effectiveness of these tools is in question. While the amount of money invested in such a strategy may be great, the returns on the investment may not be as abundant as hoped (Bush 1998).

While fewer numbers of schools are investing in what Bush calls "communications-related activities" for current students, such as newsletters and calendars, "informal student-faculty gatherings, assigning top instructors to mass sections, and opening satellite locations for classes," these methods are actually considered very effective by those few schools that actually utilize the concepts (Bush 1998). "It appears that the more interaction and convenience for students, the more effective the program" (Bush 1998).

Other methods that are currently being utilized by a few universities include: guest speakers/visits to the classroom, assigned task forces for enrollment, and incorporating business courses into other majors (Bush 1998).

Further suggestions relating to retention would be to have graduating students network with alumni through associations and business contacts in order to help them find jobs more easily (Rienerth 1999). State associations could work to change regulations which currently limit graduates from some jobs, such as entry-level positions in social service for sociology majors (Rienerth 1999). Finally, some

schools and departments might consider certification, a method that has already been used successfully in some fields in order to reinforce “visibility” and “credibility” (Rienerth 1999).

External Marketing Strategies

The choice students make to select a particular college over another is one of the most important aspects of the recruiting process. The more closely the individual characteristics of each college “fit” the characteristics of their target student population, the more likely that students will include the school in their list of choices (Paulsen 1990). Marketing the school’s particular characteristics to the desired population is the main aspect of external marketing strategies. Important factors in evaluating a college’s overall marketing strategy include assessing how closely the current student characteristics match that of the college or of its competitors. This process will allow a school to “identify its competitors, assess its image, determine its market position compared to competitors, identify what determines matriculation choices, and identify student market segments by enrollment yield” (Paulsen 1990).

Closely tied to the issue of school characteristics is that of “image-building,” which according to Bush is one of the most common marketing strategies followed in her study on southern business schools (1998). Fred Gehrung, president of Gehrung and Associates (one of the top higher education marketing consulting companies), notes that in their surveys of thousands of high school and first-year college students, image or reputation is invariably ranked highest as the reason why a student had chosen their particular school. Image building came before “location, cost, or the availability of a specific major” (Bush 1998).

Several methods are commonly used to enhance a school’s image or reputation to students or potential employers of graduates, and even the population in general. One of the most common methods is revising or updating brochures (Bush 1990). This may include separate brochures for each program concentration to draw in students attracted to a specific job or a listing the jobs obtained by previous graduates of the school (Rienerth 1999). A whopping 91% of those surveyed by Bush said that their institution utilized the brochures in attempting to recruit students (1990). Bush notes, however that the most common methods being used may not always be the most effective.

Other common methods being utilized by universities include media coverage by newspaper, radio, spot tv, magazine, and billboard (Bush 1990). Schools may even utilize short ads in movie theaters (Lords 2000).

One method that is becoming more and more popular is the electronic brochure or home page on the World Wide Web (Rienerth 1990; Paulsen 1999; Hartigan 2000; THE Journal 1997). Students have access to information chat rooms, interactive campus tours via Web sites, and online application (Roach 1999). “Where previous generation of college hopefuls labored on the family typewriter in an often counterproductive attempt to produce neat applications, today’s Web-savvy students are finding they can zoom through the ‘paperwork’ with [the] point-and-click ease of the Internet” (Terrell 1999). This method will also save the admissions office time and money and will make evaluating applications much easier (Terrell 1999; Roach 1999). According to one survey, Web applications are preferred by 24% of students (Terrell 1999).

Some schools may utilize predictive software techniques to gain the most from their marketing efforts. Software is being developed specially for college admissions, enrollment management and retention services (Roach 1999). These firms will also act as consulting companies providing up-to-date information and research (Lords 2000; Gose 1999). These companies may even provide “electronic focus groups” that evaluate a college’s admissions publications (Gose 1999). One company advises colleges to adopt aggressive telemarketing strategies which helps to decrease the amount of time faculty would spend traveling to recruit prospective students in person (Gose 1999).

Such methods as predictive software and hiring a consulting company are being utilized by those who realize that their future depends upon the best information available. For example, community colleges whose enrollments are being undercut by increased competition from four-year schools and online programs have found consulting companies to be extremely beneficial to increasing their enrollments (Lords 2000). While use of a consulting company is expensive, but those who have used this approach feel it is worth the cost. “When you first look at it, you say, ‘Oh my G--, this is expensive,’...But when you see what they did and the changes it allowed us to make, it was a bargain” (Lords 2000).

Many schools try to gain exposure into the community by recruiting at community colleges and two-year schools (Rienerth 1990; Paulsen 1999). Rienerth suggests that the use of “conference sessions”

could help improve the relationship of the college with community colleges and “facilitate the transfer of students” (1990). In marketing targeted to high school students, universities can help to provide teachers with the expertise and resources needed to expose their students to the opportunities available with a college degree (Riennerth 1990). Speakers who gain access to high schools and other universities will also heighten awareness of the college in the community. A speakers list may developed and updated to demonstrate the usefulness of degree programs the college can offer (Riennerth 1990). A new method may be “virtual visits” to a school by use of video-conferencing to allow students from high schools to interact directly with faculty at several colleges (Carnevale 2000).

In order to better network with potential employers, universities may offer workshops and programs regarding specific topics in their industry and seek to show how the university’s graduates would be beneficial to this industry (Riennerth 1990). More than 60% of those who participated in Bush’s survey said their particular institution had identified potential companies for graduating students (1990).

Universities may also utilize an on-going data collection process, such as collecting information from graduating seniors on the effectiveness of their programs in equipping them for jobs within their field, information on the jobs alumni currently hold, and which recruitment efforts made by the university have been successful (Riennerth 1990).

One method utilized by some schools that Bush felt was likely to be most beneficial in planning the long-term marketing strategy of a school, was that of hiring a full-time marketing director to oversee the planning and implementation of such a strategy (1990). Bush feels that this may be especially important in light of the difficulty and frustration many universities face in attempting to successfully market their schools in the face of severe limitations in time, resources and money (1990). Gose agrees: “...[T]he days are over when a college could hire a personable admissions dean, send out handsome viewbooks, and consider its recruiting strategy complete. Today, it seems, if a college doesn’t have someone in the admissions office who understands concepts such as logistic analysis, predictive modeling, and financial-aid leveraging, it had better go find someone who does” (1999).

CONCLUSION

In spite of the many difficulties schools are now facing in terms of reduced numbers of students who are entering college, universities are finding newer and better ways to promote their programs. The

key to success in this area seems to be a strategic long-term game plan which includes taking into consideration both internal and external means of recruiting and retention.

The current study is an attempt to help colleges, and specifically hospitality and tourism programs, understand which methods and tools have been the most successful in raising enrollments. By increasing the amount of information available to hospitality and tourism programs, it is hoped that greater numbers of students will enroll in the programs and find satisfaction and fulfillment in the hospitality industry.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The research study focused on the marketing strategies being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs in order to provide them with more information on the best ways to recruit and retain students. In order to do so, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed. This was done in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issues being faced by hospitality and tourism programs and to gain information on how to deal with these issues.

The qualitative research methods took the form of formal personal interviews with several persons familiar with the enrollment issues. All of the people interviewed have extensive amounts of both experience in the hospitality industry and in the educational field. Their opinions reflect their years of dedication to the program and the amount of energy employed to make it better.

The quantitative research methods utilized a questionnaire that was distributed to a number of hospitality and tourism program directors or program chairpersons around the United States in order to gain their perceptions on which marketing strategies and tools were considered most effective. The information gained from these sources could then be compiled and compared with the information found in the literature review to provide an up-to-date and relevant perspective of the problem and possible solutions.

Chapter Three is an explanation of how the interviews were completed and how the population and sample were chosen for the study. It also provides an explanation of the theoretical perceptions behind the questionnaire and the interviews.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population for the study was four-year Hospitality and Tourism programs in the United States. The population was limited to four-year programs since the characteristics of two-year schools, certification programs, and graduate programs were felt to be extremely heterogeneous. The sampling frame chosen for the study was Chrie's list of four-year Hospitality and Tourism programs. The list provided not only information on each school, but also the name and information of the person who should be contacted by prospective students. Therefore, this person would have the most relevant and timely data on the number of students enrolling in the program and which marketing strategies would be most effective in drawing students.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To achieve the research objectives, the researcher employed the use of a survey and interview techniques to collect primary data.

Interviews

The researcher conducted personal interviews (Appendix A) with the chair, the undergraduate and the graduate program directors of hospitality and tourism at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and with two University professors in the hospitality program at UW-Stout. All of them have been in the program a significant amount of time and have personally witnessed the decline in enrollment over a number of years. Several of them have also been directly involved in formal efforts to market the hospitality program and all offer a unique contribution to the picture of enrollments in hospitality and tourism program. As Dr. Josiam would say, the hospitality program at Stout acts as a “microcosm” of college enrollment in hospitality and tourism programs nationwide.

The interview questions attempted to gain a “cross-section” understanding of the problem by identifying issues specific to the enrollment situation for hospitality and tourism programs. The interview can be broken into five main sections: the interviewer’s background, the problem, its significance, the reaction of their department, and the future of the problem.

1. The first two questions establish the interviewee’s background concerning marketing and the enrollment situation at their university.
2. The next section asked the interviewee to describe the enrollment situation and compare of national enrollments in hospitality and tourism programs with enrollments for the program at their particular university. They also described the reasons for the decline. This portion of the interview was extremely important to the study in that it helped to lay out the real issues behind declines for hospitality programs. The researcher wanted to find out if the causes of the decline for hospitality programs differed greatly from college enrollments at the university level. Virtually no published data was available concerning the issues hospitality and tourism programs face.
3. Next, the interviewee was asked to state the significance of this problem, both in general and to their department. This would help to identify the significance of the problem to a local university, education in general, or to the hospitality industry.

4. The interviewees were asked to describe the measures their department has used to combat the problem and to describe which strategies they felt had been most effective. This question gave interviewees a chance to recount not only what had been done to raise enrollments, but their experience and opinions on which strategies had been most effective would provide yet another solution to the problems being faced by many programs.
5. The final section of the interview was directed towards the future. Interviewees were asked what predictions they would make about the enrollment situation. They were also asked to describe what new strategies they would like to see their department use, especially related to technological advances and innovations.

Survey

The contents of the survey was adapted and revised from a study done by Victoria Bush, O. C. Ferrell, and James L. Thomas (1998). Their exploratory study focused on the strategies being used to market the business school. Since their research coincided closely with the objectives of the current research, permission was obtained to generalize their questionnaire to hospitality and tourism programs. However, a copy of their survey could not be found, so the actual layout of the survey for this study is original while much of the content is adapted from the study on business schools.

The survey instrument (Appendix B) included 42 questions addressing the effectiveness of marketing strategies being used by hospitality and tourism programs. The survey was broken into two main sections. The first part of the survey addressed the demographic information of the college or university so that significant variations between schools could be taken into account. The second part of the survey covered what marketing strategies each school was actually using and which methods were felt to be most effective.

The first two questions, “Your school location—Rural or Urban?” and “Your school type—Public or Private?”, helped the researcher to identify whether geographic location or school type were factors in the perceived effectiveness of the marketing strategies. These two questions would also help to identify whether certain types of schools faced greater declines or were able to stabilize or increase their enrollments better than others.

The next two questions asked respondents to state the current number of undergraduate students enrolled: 1) at their university/college, 2) in their Hospitality and Tourism program. Programs could then be compared by size on all other questions.

The fifth question was the pivotal point of the entire survey since it asked, “Has your program experience overall enrollment growth in the past five years?” This question would not only provide data as to how many programs had experienced growth, but would also be foundational as to which marketing strategies were indeed most effective—those schools who had experienced growth or whose programs were the largest as a percentage of their university/college would likely have the best idea of how to foster growth. By comparing the information gained from the survey on the size of their programs with that of the Chrie information, it would also be possible to gain an idea of whether the growth (or decline) of the programs was small or dramatic or if the size of the program seemed to have stabilized.

Questions 6-10 stemmed out of recommendations given in the Bush, Ferrell and Thomas study. They suggested that the use of a strategic plan for the department, a full-time marketing director, use of a consulting service/company and of marketing research would contribute to more effective marketing and therefore, greater numbers of students enrolling in a particular program. This study attempted to gain a tentative answer of whether any schools were actually using some of these ideas, and if a correlation could be drawn between schools who used one or more of these methods and an increase in their enrollment.

For the next 31 items, a combination of a 5-point Likert scale and check-boxes were used for each item. For example, respondents were asked to circle whether or not they felt that the marketing activity was “very effective” or “not effective” on a Likert scale, 5 being “extremely effective” and 1 being “not effective. They were also asked to place a check mark in the box next to the activities/tools their program was currently using. The list of 31 items was organized categorically: items #11 to #21 “internal activities”, items #22 to #33 are “external activities”, and items #34 to #41 are “marketing tools”. There were also two open spots for write-ins in case respondents wished to add any marketing strategies or tools that were not already listed.

The final question on the survey asked “If your program has advertised separately from the general college advertising, what campaign theme was used most often?” This question would demonstrate

the approach the college or university took toward advertising and could be compared to the school's location and type—would schools that were different in location and type use a different theme?

DATA COLLECTION

Interviews

Five personal interviews were conducted by the researcher in the spring of 2001. All of the interviews were taped with the participant's permission and the results transcribed into written form by the researcher.

The first person to be interviewed was Mr. Brian Bergquist, an Associate professor in the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. Mr. Bergquist not only completed his Master's degree at Stout, but has also been teaching for ten years.

Mr. Robert Davies is the Graduate Program Director of the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has been at UW-Stout for ten and a half years.

Mr. Darrell Van Loenen is the Undergraduate Program Director of the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and has been at Stout for fourteen years.

Dr. Joseph Holland is Department Chair of the Hospitality and Tourism Graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has been at Stout for fifteen years. Dr. Holland also completed his Undergraduate Degree at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Dr. Bharath Josiam has been teaching marketing and hospitality classes for eleven years at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the Hospitality and Tourism program.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was mailed to 110 colleges and universities as listed in the 1999 copy of the Chrie Guide to College Programs in Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Tourism. The return rate over a three week period was 42% with 46 completed surveys being returned.

A cover letter (Appendix C) was included with the survey to explain to participants the purpose of the study and its importance to their program. The cover letter utilized official University of Wisconsin-Stout letterhead paper (with permission) and included the signatures of the Hospitality and Tourism graduate department chairperson (Joseph Holland) and of the thesis advisor (Brian Bergquist) because of

their importance to the study. A self-addressed stamped envelope was also sent along with the survey to encourage returns. A consent form was included on the survey.

DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews

The transcribed interviews were closely examined for common themes which would provide a better understanding of the problem being studied and give information specific to hospitality and tourism programs. Several recurring themes were used to support an understanding of the problem in the literature review and are considered primary data gathered by the researcher. The researcher examined whether or not the interview data corresponded with the findings from the questionnaire data.

Questionnaire

The data from the returned questionnaires was entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 10.0 spreadsheet by the researcher. Frequency and percentage distributions were calculated, along with mean, median and standard deviation.

LIMITATIONS

1. The sampling frame was taken from Chrie's listing on Hospitality programs, and therefore was limited to about 110 universities and colleges within the United States. This list, while being from an extremely credible source and offering a large enough and fairly homogeneous sampling frame to provide adequate data for the study, is not exhaustive.
2. The sample represents only those programs who are strictly four-year hospitality and tourism programs. It does not include programs who offer a certification, two-year degrees or graduate degrees in hospitality and tourism.
3. The participants' responses on the effectiveness of the marketing strategies and tools being used are their opinions. It would be impossible to gauge the effectiveness of the strategies based on the numbers of students who enroll in a given program each semester based on one specific item or tool, since all tools work together. "There is no magic bullet" (Josiam, interview, 2001) that will solve a school's enrollment problems—each strategy must work in tandem with several other strategies to bring the desired responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify and evaluate the marketing strategies being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs within the United States. Chapter Four will present the results of the study and will address the methods employed to analyze the data from the interviews and from the questionnaire.

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Five personal interviews were completed and tape-recorded. After being transcribed, the interviews were analyzed by theme compilation and the results compared with the information found through the review of previous literature.

Interview with Brian Bergquist

Mr. Brian Bergquist is an Associate professor in the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and has been teaching for ten years. He also completed his Master's Degree at Stout on the factors influencing freshmen to enroll at Stout and a follow-up study along the same lines. Mr. Bergquist has acted as the chairperson and as an active member in a marketing committee organized for the Hospitality and Tourism program at Stout to try and improve enrollments. He has also been involved in the actual executive marketing plan for the University as well.

Mr. Bergquist indicated that the number of students in the hospitality program at UW-Stout has been declining steadily over the past few years. In fact, he notes that there were as many as 1400 students enrolled in the program twelve to fifteen years ago ("Our program used to be the largest program on campus..."), whereas now there are only about 300 or so in the undergraduate program. This trend is reflected in other programs around the country.

Several reasons may contribute to the problem, one of the most important being the state of the economy. The economy has been so healthy that students are choosing to go straight to work out of high school versus going into a four year degree program. Companies are experiencing a labor crunch—there is a much greater need for qualified employees.

Enrollments may also be declining because many people feel that the "American dream" is still possible—that "if you dedicate yourself and really challenge yourself, you can still climb up the ranks in

the restaurant business. That you can eventually, if you work hard enough and long enough, you can actually own your own business without the college degree.” While this may be true, the benefits of a college degree still far outweigh the other options. College students gain a foundational understanding of the hospitality business that will help them to avoid mistakes those without the degree will make, and a college degree will offer them many more opportunities for advancement in their field.

Another reason may be the perception of the industry as a “grind ‘em up and spit ‘em out industry”—lots of stress and little glory, with long hours and customer complaints the norm. There has also been a large growth in the number of hospitality programs available, from small community colleges to private colleges offering hospitality classes.

The decline is significant in that Stout is the only college in the entire state [of Wisconsin] that offers a hotel, restaurant and tourism four-year undergraduate degree or a graduate degree in hospitality management. “The tech schools offer associate degrees in culinary arts or hospitality, but Stout is the only one that offers a management degree in business related to Hospitality and Tourism.”

The problem is significant at other levels too—as the number of students in the program decreases, the number of faculty needed will decrease also. This is important because untenured professors, even those with a great deal of time in the program and teaching and industry experience will be less likely to be kept on in their positions, causing turnover to increase and the quality of education to be lowered.

In reaction to the decline, the Hospitality and Tourism department at Stout has taken several measures to try and recruit greater numbers of students to their program. Previous approaches involved mailings to teachers at every high school in Wisconsin and posters in the high schools.

Mr. Bergquist notes that everyone in the department is considered responsible for marketing. “Everyone has been marketing in their own unique way—going to trade shows, being a member of different organizations, talking to high schools, ect.” A committee was even organized within the department that would explore the issues and develop some new strategies for marketing the hospitality program.

Some of the strategies that have been used in the past have been very effective—such as talking to high school students in their classes, giving tours to prospective students, going to trade shows. However,

these approaches proved to be very time-consuming for professors whose first responsibility is to their current students. A strategy that Mr. Bergquist feels would be very effective would be to direct marketing efforts towards parents, since this group was found to be “the number one factor in influence in career and college choices” for students (Bergquist 1990). “But,” he says, “how do you send out a mailing to the parent of [every college-bound high school student]? It’s logistically very costly.”

Currently, Mr. Bergquist is working with a Student Ambassador program to try to gain personal contacts with high school students. The data gained from these visits will be combined into a database which would be used to email the students information about the Hospitality and Tourism program offered at Stout. Although not all high schools are online, some students might be reached by this approach. Another new strategy that Mr. Bergquist suggested that might be effective, but that has not been tested, is a cd-rom with a virtual tour attached as a streaming video, perhaps of the campus facilities or within the Home Economics Department that houses the Hospitality and Tourism program at Stout.

In looking toward the future, Mr. Bergquist believes that the situation of declining enrollments will not be reversed until a recession occurs that will cause students to put more value on a four-year degree. If, for example, companies in the industry must downsize because of a recession, those employees without a college education will be the first to be cut and forced to go back to school. Those with a college education will also be much more eligible for management positions.

Interview with Robert Davies

Mr. Robert Davies is the Graduate Program Director of the Hospitality and Tourism program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. In this capacity, he is responsible for helping to increase and maintain enrollments for the department and acts as program advisor to the graduate students. He has been at UW-Stout for ten and a half years.

In describing the enrollment situation around the country, Mr. Davies agreed that many programs besides hospitality and tourism have been facing declining enrollments. But, he noted, this phenomenon should not have been a surprise to administrators, since this was predictable as the number of students graduating from high school dipped lower. He believes that the problem will only continue to get worse as the decline accelerates.

Mr. Davies feels that many factors are responsible for the decline, both for national enrollments for all programs, and several that relate specifically to hospitality and tourism. There are fewer numbers of students to choose from, and this is a problem for schools like Stout who draw students primarily from a four or five state region. “We are not a national player like Las Vegas or Houston or Cornell...” said Mr. Davies. “We have more universities competing for the same group of people, so therefore we’re going to have a smaller piece of the pie whether we like it or not.” Another factor is the change in Admissions criteria for entering the University—students must now score higher on the ACT to even be considered for admission which even further limits the pool of students to be drawn from. The problem is compounded as the University places great emphasis on marketing the school as a whole, but in many respects fails to market its individual programs, such as hospitality and tourism.

Hospitality and Tourism programs face even bigger dilemmas in attempting to capture their “piece of the pie.” Much of the problem has to do with the “perceived value” of education. “Some people come out of high school making more money than people who have been going to school for four years.” This is a major problem especially when added to the fact that the hospitality industry has grown very quickly and there is a greater need for employees. Employers who focus on their short-term needs for help will discourage a student from going to college even if this choice will hurt the student in the long run. “Eventually they [the students] realize they need to get something more, and industry says, ‘You don’t have a degree so you can’t move forward.’”

Another problem faced specifically by hospitality programs in the early nineties was an identity problem—high schools students in general didn’t know what “hospitality” meant and therefore left these schools out their college search. Since then, many schools have changed the name of their programs back to “hotel, restaurant and tourism.”

Mr. Davies notes that another reason many students are not attracted to hospitality and tourism programs is that the industry may be perceived as being very challenging; while it can be very fulfilling in the long run, many people feel that it takes too much hard work to pay off. “The reality of it is, [Hospitality and Tourism] is an industry that requires you to work, and work hard. A lot of people don’t want to do that anymore.”

The problem of declining enrollments is not only important to hospitality education but is especially significant when considering the future of the hospitality industry. As more and more hotels and restaurants are built, the industry will get more and more saturated and there will be fewer and fewer employees to fill the job openings. “What we’ve come to expect isn’t there...it is scary to realize that in the next fifteen years, the workplace may be a little shy of quality and quantity.”

In the past, many departments did not do their own advertising or marketing because it was felt that the University was responsible to draw in a sufficient number of students to fill their programs. However, that has all changed as the numbers continue to fall dramatically for hospitality programs. The program at Stout has focused on high schools, trying to come up with innovative new ways to “outreach.” Other strategies have included a marketing committee and visitation.

Mr. Davies suggested that one of the most effective strategies might be to use price as a factor in marketing to parents, since Stout is considered one of the most economic options in the state of Wisconsin. Personal presentations to students are also extremely effective in encouraging enrollment, since “people make a lot of decisions based on who they meet.” Technological innovations such as cd-roms might also be useful in attracting more students.

Another approach would be the conversion to online courses for the program in order to enlarge the range of students reached by the hospitality program. [This venture is already well underway in the graduate program at Stout.] “There is a new way of going to school, and younger generations are looking at that [online courses] as a new way of accelerating a career program...It’s new, innovative, and different.” The University could also help to boost enrollments by revising their web page to lead more quickly and directly to the individual programs so that prospective students will see the information about the department much more quickly. A free-standing web page for the department would also help to deal more effectively with the problem.

Mr. Davies agreed that an economic recession would help to reverse the trend of declining enrollments. It would also cause the government to invest more money in education in order to help “put people back on their feet based on what’s perceived to be a need.” He believes that a paradigm shift will be necessary to change management and leadership perspectives. “Marketing is now a requirement...because

people change their point of view of what they're doing with the degree...[We need to] give people more tools to become more effective in the workplace.”

Interview with Darrell Van Loenen

Mr. Darrell Van Loenen has been the Undergraduate Program Director of the Hospitality and Tourism program for five years at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has been at Stout for fourteen years altogether and has been involved in marketing research concerning the factors that influence high school students about the people who were most influential in their college choices.

Mr. Van Loenen indicated that college enrollments in general were rising, but that enrollments of hospitality programs were decreasing—the hospitality program at Stout was at 1400 in the 1980s but was down to 500 in 2001.

One of the major causes of this situation is that the University of Wisconsin-Stout has changed its position on admission requirements—“Stout was an open-enrollment university and now it is a competitive enrollment university— that now you have to have a certain grade point average, you have to have certain ACT scores, and you have to have all of the college prep courses.” He feels that this may one of the most influential factors in the decline for the hospitality department at Stout. “H & T majors generally didn't have all those college prep courses, such as three years of science, three years of math. They generally had two years of science, two years of math. So I think we lost a market [with] those students.”

Another factor may be competition with technical schools for students coming out of high school. Students find that they can make more money going into technology after spending only two years at a tech school, compared to spending four years to gain entry-level positions in the hospitality industry.

Mr. Van Loenen also suggests that TV programming may have had an effect on enrollments. Research has demonstrated that television does have a dramatic effect on the career paths students choose. “For example, when L.A. Law was popular, applications to law school went up 15%. When ER became popular, applications to medical schools went up...” For many years hospitality programs had hours of free advertising in such shows as Hotel, Love Boat and Cheers, but the hospitality industry has not been shown very favorably on television in the past few years.

Mr. Van Loenen indicated that the problem of declining enrollments is significant to hospitality programs in that lower numbers of students invariably lead to fewer department members being needed.

“The good thing about having a large program is that you can have a lot of different professors, with specialties in different areas—accounting, hotels, restaurant, tourism.” Such specialization is not possible with a small program. “Eventually it will have an effect on the quality of the program, because you’ll have to have professors teaching in areas in which they’re not really experts...”

Several strategies have been used by the hospitality department to increase enrollments. Personal visits to other schools [high schools, two year schools] by professors have been one avenue. Getting high school students to visit the Stout campus has also been used in the past. The department has also brought guidance counselors to the campus in an effort to enlist their support. A great deal of printed material and brochures have been generated which was sent out to high school guidance counselors [and to prospective students].

Mr. Van Loenen suggests that the most effective strategy would be to target students in the Twin Cities [Minneapolis/St. Paul] area. With such a large population base, he feels that efforts in that direction would be more productive than many of the strategies that have been used in the past. He also suggests that advertising on television would generate responses and enlarge awareness of Stout and the Hospitality program.

As regarding the future, Mr. Van Loenen predicts that enrollments for hospitality programs will continue to go down. Enrollments are closely tied to the economy in that when the economy is good, there are jobs in every field and education is not perceived to be as important. However, when the economy turns downward, greater numbers of students will be drawn to hospitality programs.

Interview with Joseph Holland

Dr. Joseph Holland is the Department Chair for the Hospitality and Tourism graduate program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. He has been at Stout for fifteen years, teaching hospitality and tourism. He also completed his Bachelor’s degree at Stout. He spent several years in the hospitality industry involved in marketing and marketing research.

The hospitality and tourism department at the University of Wisconsin-Stout is facing a dramatic drop in enrollments in the program for undergraduates. Mr. Holland outlines several reasons for the decline. These include a strong economy, the need in the hospitality industry for good workers, and more stringent admission requirements.

Students may be looking for degrees that are more specialized, as seen when students start out in hospitality and end up in a business major instead. Or, perhaps the focus of the hospitality and tourism program may be too narrow and the program may need to be under a different “umbrella,” such as the service management degree program that has been initiated recently. He also suggests that more research may be needed to be sure that salaries and benefits for graduates of the program are comparable to those in other fields. Are students who have graduated five, seven, or ten years ago still satisfied in their careers—did the program at Stout meet their needs?

In contrast to the undergraduate program, the hospitality and tourism graduate program at Stout is growing rapidly, and has become the largest graduate program on campus. This is due in part to the number of international students who have come to the program, but especially to the number of students involved in the online program. The program is one of the only successful online programs in the UW system. The concepts that have helped to make this program successful could be utilized the undergraduate levels. “We’re going to have to look at even how we make courses available and where the markets are.” Some students may prefer to get information or to take most of their classes online.

While Mr. Holland advocates that this type of service is the “wave of the future,” he also cautions that several issues come to the surface when considering offering classes online—the amount and availability of support services for online students, banding and Internet access, software budgets. Should all the classrooms be wired for Internet access or only certain “labs”? Is the University working hard enough or quick enough to get support systems in place for a “lap-top” university (which will take place in Fall 2001)? What kind of platforms will need to be available to students? (Are Mac and PC interchangeable platforms necessary?) While the market segment of online students may be extremely attractive, several important issues will need to be settled first and systems put into place which can deliver the level of service students are expecting.

Another market for hospitality and tourism education may be employees already in the industry who lack formal education. A “shifting” economy may provide opportunities to provide them with skills to make them more valuable to their employer. An “executive management program” could even be created for managers and upper-level managers who want to keep an edge on a quickly changing environment.

While Mr. Holland sees the difficulties facing the undergraduate hospitality program, he recommends “thinking outside of the box”—“its a different type of teaching now and students aren’t necessarily going to come to us in the same way that they have before.” Exploration, research, and creative thinking are needed to deal effectively with the problems being faced by hospitality programs.

Interview with Bharath Josiam

Mr. Bharath Josiam has been at Stout for eleven years in the Hospitality and Tourism Department. His educational background at the master’s level is in marketing and he has been teaching marketing for the last thirteen years. He was also involved in working with a marketing committee set up in the department to recruit students to Hospitality and Tourism.

Over the time that he has been here, Dr. Josiam has seen the numbers of students in Hospitality and Tourism fall dramatically—from 1400 to less than 400 students. He compares the numbers of students in the program to those at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. In 1985-87, there were about 1300 students in the program there; but the numbers have fallen to somewhere around 400 or 500.

This phenomenon is being repeated at other schools, even large universities like Michigan State or Purdue. “All of these schools are facing declining enrollments and some of them have made a virtue of necessity by basically saying, ‘Oh, 1400 is too much; we were swamped [before the numbers went down]...This is about the right number so that we can deliver quality education.’ Frankly, we [here at Stout] would...be happy if [enrollments] would stabilize...But when you see the numbers declining every single year, you know, its just like the stock market—‘If everybody says the news is bad, the news is bad, and it gets worse before it gets better.’”

When asked to describe the reasons for the decline, Dr. Josiam first listed several things that are not responsible for causing enrollment problems, such as students having difficulty getting a job or establishing connections with recruiters. In fact, he says, in the last two or three years, there have been more recruiters than graduating students at the college-sponsored Career Day. Stout’s computer facilities are also extremely advanced—“[We have] better computer facilities than around the country”—so access to technology can not be considered a key deterrent for prospective students.

Reasons for the decline encompass both internal and external forces. The industry places a very high priority on students, conceivably offering management or supervisory promotions so that students will

not return to college and complete their degree unless strongly motivated to do so. This trend may also be deterring students from two-year schools to come to Stout, since there are so many opportunities for work in the hospitality industry, even without a four-year degree.

Internally, Stout has raised the ACT admissions score by just a few points, but this has had a dramatic effect on the number of students entering hospitality and tourism at Stout. “Historically [our department] had the students with the lowest ACT scores. And we [were] quite happy to have them, because this is a field which does not call for...calculus abilities,...it calls for working hard, being willing to get your hands dirty...And we did a good job with them because their personality matched really what we were doing out here.”

The decline is important in that with large numbers of students, professors are able to specialize in one area and teach multiple sections of students on one subject. This approach will allow the professor to build up greater expertise in that area and strengthen the quality of teaching that the students receive. “For example, to date, I have largely been teaching marketing management; I’m on the editorial board of marketing journals, ect. But if, three years down the road, enrollment declines even more—then I will be teaching marketing, I will be teaching tourism, I will be teaching food and beverage—and then I won’t have the time to specialize in any area, or to go in-depth in any area.”

Fewer numbers of students will also result in fewer sections of classes being offered, and even some classes being offered once a year, such as only being offered in the Fall semester but not in the Spring. This will decrease the options available to students and make it more difficult for them to schedule important classes or to focus the scope of their learning on one area. The decline will also be important in that fewer students will lead to fewer recruiters from the hospitality industry coming to Stout.

In the past, faculty members have traveled to high schools around Wisconsin, attempting to recruit students. However, the logistics of this approach are too time-consuming to be a long-term solution and faculty have found it difficult to juggle teaching responsibilities with personal recruiting methods. Faculty also help to guide students around campus when they come to visit Stout. The department sends printed brochures to prospective students and to students at Stout who are undecided in their major to help increase awareness of the program.

Outreach programs are also being developed to take the faculty to where the students are. For instance, a pilot program started in Baraboo, Wisconsin offers a certificate type program, a concept which may be replicated in other areas such as Hudson, River Falls, or Minneapolis/St. Paul. It is hoped that this approach will enlarge the scope of the program.

Another approach would be to deliver education using new technology, such as a cd-rom or complete online access to application materials and classes. Hybrid programs are being developed that would offer the programs partially online, partially on site. This concept may increase convenience for students as it would allow them to reside away from the school but still have access to the program.

Dr. Josiam feels that it is impossible to predict where events will lead as to the enrollment situation, but he notes that it one should not assume that things will turn around automatically. He suggests that a combination of methods will be needed to make an impact on the situation—“There is no magic bullet.”

SURVEY RESPONSES

Three research objectives guided the questionnaire: to identify the marketing strategies being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs, to analyze the effectiveness of the marketing strategies being used, and to increase the amount of information available to Hospitality and Tourism programs in order to help them recruit greater numbers of students to their programs. The data collected from the survey was analyzed by using SPSS 10.0. A total 110 surveys was distributed, with 46 completed surveys being returned.

Demographic Profile of Hospitality Programs

Table 1 reflects the demographics of the hospitality and tourism programs in the study. By location, there were more rural schools (26) than urban (20). 63% (29) of the respondents' universities were public institutions, while 37% (17) were privately run institutions.

Table 1. Demographic profile of Hospitality and Tourism Programs

<u>Demographic variable</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
School Location (n=46) ^a		
Rural	26	56.5
Urban	20	43.5
School Type (n=46) ^a		
Public	29	63.0
Private	17	37.0

Number enrolled in university/college (n=44) ^a		
0-9,999	18	40.9
10,000-19,999	15	34.0
20,000-29,999	9	20.4
30,000-39,000	2	4.5
Number enrolled in program (n=46) ^a		
0-99	20	43.4
100-199	12	26.0
200-299	7	15.2
300-399	0	0.0
400-499	2	4.3
500-599	2	4.3
600+	3	6.5

^an denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

40.9% (18) of the universities/colleges responding had total enrollments of less than 10,000 students. 34.0% (15) had enrollments between 10,000 and 20,000. 20.4% (9) had between 20,000 and 30,000 and 4.5% (2) had enrollments over 30,000 students.

When considering program enrollments alone, 43.4% (20) of the programs had less than 100 students. 26% (12) had between 100 and 200 students in their program. 15.2% (7) had between 200 and 300 students. 2 programs (4.3%) enrolled between 400 and 500 students; 2 (4.3%) enrolled between 500 and 600 students; and 3 (6.5%) enrolled over 600 students in their programs.

Possible growth factors

Exactly half of the hospitality and tourism programs surveyed had experienced overall growth in the enrollments of their programs over a five year period while half had remained the same or declined in enrollments (Table 2). Of all the programs responding to the survey, 29 (63%) had a plan for recruiting students to their program that was separate from university marketing and 6 (13%) were in the process of developing a separate plan. 11 (23.9%) did not have a plan that was distinct from general university recruiting. 45 of the 46 programs surveyed do not have a full-time marketing director or use a consulting company. One school considered it's enrollment coordinator to be a marketing director for their program and one school uses a consulting company. Formal marketing research was only utilized by 10 (21.7%) of the 46 hospitality programs that responded.

Respondents were asked if their program had advertised separately from general college advertising. If they had, they were asked which campaign themes were used most often by their programs. Of the 24 respondents who answered the question, 11 programs (45.8%) advertised the "success of

previous graduates” most often as a campaign theme to attract students. “Image” also scored very high (9; 37.5%), followed by location (2; 8.3%). One program utilized its Web address as its main advertising theme while another felt that its unique program was the main theme. Cost was not advertised as a main theme in attracting students.

Table 2. Possible growth factors of Hospitality and Tourism Programs

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Overall enrollment growth in the past five years (n=46) ^a		
Yes	23	50.0
No	23	50.0
Plan for recruiting which is separate from the university (n=46) ^a		
Yes	29	63.0
No	11	23.9
Developing one	6	13.0
Full-time marketing director (n=46) ^a		
Yes	1	2.2
No	45	97.8
Utilize a consulting company (n=46) ^a		
Yes	1	2.2
No	45	97.8
Marketing Research (n=46) ^a		
Yes	10	21.7
No	36	78.3
Campaign Theme (n=24) ^a		
Success of previous graduates	11	45.8
Image	9	37.5
Location	2	8.3
Unique program	1	4.1
Web address	1	4.1
Cost	0	0.0

^an denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

Internal Activities being used

The first research objective was to identify what marketing strategies were being used by hospitality programs. The main body of the survey was broken into three sections: internal activities, external activities and tools. Respondents were asked to indicate which activities they were currently using and to rate the effectiveness of each activity.

Table 3 indicates the internal activities currently being used by the hospitality programs. These were efforts directed within the program to bring greater enrollments by increasing the quality of the program, and by retaining current students. 58.7% of hospitality programs had revised or updated their

curriculum in the past five years. The second most common activity was to update computer equipment and labs (47.8%). Many programs also sponsored career fairs each semester or year to allow students to interact with recruiters (45.7%). Another popular activity was to sponsor informal student/faculty events (43.5%).

Several programs provided more multimedia to classrooms (37%). 23.9% tracked program graduates in order to gauge whether students had stayed within the industry or had gone into other fields after graduating from the program. A student newsletter or a calendar was developed by 21.7% of programs in an effort to keep students informed of upcoming and past events related to their program. Distance-learning classrooms were developed to increase the area met by the program (21.7%). 15.2% changed class enrollment sizes, and 10.9% offered satellite locations for classes.

External Activities being used

Table 4 outlines the various external methods being used by hospitality programs to increase enrollments. 69.6% encouraged visits or guest lectures. Many programs revised their brochures to reflect the unique offerings of their program (60.9%), or cultivated relationships with high schools in order to draw students (58.7%). Programs also identified corporations who might interested in students graduating from their

Table 3. Internal Activities being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Revised/updated curriculum in past five years (n=46) ^a		
Using	27	58.7
Not using	19	41.3
Updated computer equipment/labs (n=46) ^a		
Using	22	47.8
Not using	24	52.2
Sponsored career fairs each year/semester (n=46) ^a		
Using	21	45.7
Not using	25	54.3
Developed network links for students (n=46) ^a		
Using	21	45.7
Not using	25	54.3
Sponsored informal student/faculty events (n=46) ^a		
Using	20	43.5
Not using	26	56.5
Provided more multimedia (n=46) ^a		
Using	17	37.0
Not using	29	63.0

Tracked program graduates (n=46) ^a		
Using	11	23.9
Not using	35	76.1
Student newsletter/calendar developed (n=46) ^a		
Using	10	21.7
Not using	36	78.3
Distance-learning classrooms (n=46) ^a		
Using	10	21.7
Not using	36	78.3
Changed class enrollment sizes (n=46) ^a		
Using	7	15.2
Not using	39	84.8
Satellite locations for classes (n=46) ^a		
Using	5	10.9
Not using	41	89.1

^an denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 4. External Activities being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Encouraged visits/guest lectures (n=46) ^a		
Using	32	69.6
Not using	14	30.4
Revised college brochures (n=46) ^a		
Using	28	60.9
Not using	18	39.1
Relationships with high schools (n=46) ^a		
Using	27	58.7
Not using	19	41.3
Identified corporations for graduate recruiting (n=46) ^a		
Using	21	45.7
Not using	25	54.3
Periodic press releases (n=46) ^a		
Using	17	37.0
Not using	29	63.0
Relationships with local media (n=46) ^a		
Using	15	32.6
Not using	31	67.4
Frequent interaction with public relations department (n=46) ^a		
Using	13	28.3
Not using	33	71.7
Direct-mail databases for corporations (n=46) ^a		
Using	7	15.2
Not using	39	84.8

^an denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

program (45.7%). Several utilized periodic press releases (37%), relationships with local media (32.6%), frequent interaction with their university's public relations department (28.3%), or direct-mail databases for corporations (15.2%) in order to increase public awareness of the program.

Tools being used

Table 5 illustrates the tools the programs used to spark interest in prospective students and to communicate information about the program. The most frequently used activity was an electronic brochure or Web page (60.9%). Half (50%) of the programs utilize direct-mail to potential students. All of the other methods were used by 30% or less of the programs: posters or flyers for high schools (26.1%); a recruiting video (17.4%); newspaper (15.2%); retail displays (10.9%); telemarketing (6.5%); radio (6.5%); a recruiting cd (4.3%); television (2.2%); magazines (2.2%); and billboard (2.2%).

Effectiveness of Internal Activities

The second objective of the study was to rate the effectiveness of each of the methods being used. Respondents ranked the effectiveness of each activity on a Likert scale of 1 to 5; 5 being “extremely effective,” 3 being “somewhat effective,” and 1 being “not effective.”

Table 6 summarizes the effectiveness of internal marketing activities. The internal marketing activity that received the highest rating overall was to develop network links for students with a mean score of 4.02 and a standard deviation of .91. 74.4% of respondents believed the activity to be either “extremely effective” or “very effective”. Revising or updating curriculum came up second with a mean score of 3.80 and a standard deviation of 1.02. 54.6% rated it as “extremely effective” or “very effective,” and 36.4% rated it as “somewhat effective.” Updating computer equipment or labs received a score of 3.63, with a standard deviation of .82. 44.2% rated it as “somewhat effective” as a marketing

Table 5. Tools being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Electronic brochure/Web page (n=46) ^a		
Using	28	60.9
Not using	18	39.1
Direct-mail to potential students (n=46) ^a		
Using	23	50.0
Not using	23	50.0
Posters/flyers for high schools (n=46) ^a		
Using	12	26.1
Not using	34	73.9
Recruiting video (n=46) ^a		
Using	8	17.4
Not using	38	82.6
Newspaper (n=46) ^a		
Using	7	15.2
Not using	39	84.8
Retail displays (n=46) ^a		
Using	5	10.9
Not using	41	89.1
Telemarketing (n=46) ^a		
Using	3	6.5
Not using	43	93.5
Radio (n=46) ^a		
Using	3	6.5
Not using	43	93.5
Recruiting cd (n=46) ^a		
Using	2	4.3
Not using	44	95.7
Television (n=46) ^a		
Using	1	2.2
Not using	45	97.8
Magazines (n=46) ^a		
Using	1	2.2
Not using	45	97.8
Billboard (n=46) ^a		
Using	1	2.2
Not using	45	97.8

^an denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 6. Effectiveness of Internal Activities^a

Activity	Extremely effective	Very	Somewhat effective	A little	Not effective
Developed network links for students (n=43) ^b					
Frequency	15	17	8	3	0
Percent	34.9	39.5	18.6	7.0	0.0
Mean/Sd	4.02/.91				
Revised/updated curriculum in past five years (n=44) ^b					
Frequency	15	9	16	4	0
Percent	34.1	20.5	36.4	9.1	0.0
Mean/Sd	3.80/1.02				
Updated computer equipment/labs (n=43) ^b					
Frequency	7	15	19	2	0
Percent	16.3	34.9	44.2	4.7	0.0
Mean/Sd	3.63/.82				
Sponsored career fairs each semester (n=45) ^b					
Frequency	11	14	14	3	3
Percent	24.4	31.1	31.1	6.7	6.7
Mean/Sd	3.60/1.14				
Provided more multimedia (n=45) ^b					
Frequency	8	13	16	4	4
Percent	17.8	28.9	35.6	8.9	8.9
Mean/Sd	3.38/1.15				
Sponsored informal student/faculty events (n=45) ^b					
Frequency	7	14	14	6	4
Percent	15.6	31.1	31.1	13.3	8.9
Mean/Sd	3.31/1.16				
Developed newsletters/calendars for students (n=43) ^b					
Frequency	5	10	15	8	5
Percent	11.6	23.3	34.9	18.6	11.6
Mean/Sd	3.05/1.17				
Tracked program graduates (n=39) ^b					
Frequency	6	8	11	8	6
Percent	15.4	20.5	28.2	20.5	15.4
Mean/Sd	3.00/1.30				

^aScale ranges from 5=extremely effective to 1=not effective.

^bn denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 6 continued. Effectiveness of Internal Activities^a

Activity	Extremely effective	Very	Somewhat effective	A little effective	Not effective
Opened satellite locations for classes (n=40) ^b					
Frequency	7	6	14	5	8
Percent	17.5	15.0	35.0	12.5	20.0
Mean/Sd	2.98/1.35				
Provided distance-learning classrooms (n=41) ^b					
Frequency	3	9	12	11	6
Percent	7.3	22.0	29.3	26.8	14.6
Mean/Sd	2.80/1.17				
Changed class enrollment sizes (n=43) ^b					
Frequency	2	8	19	7	7
Percent	4.7	18.6	44.2	16.3	16.3
Mean/Sd	2.79/1.08				

^aScale ranges from 5=extremely effective to 1=not effective.

^bn denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

activity. The mean score on the effectiveness of career fairs was rated as 3.60 (1.14 Sd.). 62.2% of respondents believed the activity to be “very effective” or somewhat effective.”

Providing more multimedia received a mean score of 3.38 (1.15 Sd.). Sponsoring informal student/faculty events received a mean score of 3.31 (1.16 Sd.). The mean score for developing newsletters or calendars for students was 3.05 (1.17 Sd.). Tracking program graduates was felt to be only “somewhat effective” with a mean score of 3.00 (1.30 Sd.). The three activities ranked lowest in effectiveness were: opening satellite locations for classes (2.98 Mean/1.35 Sd.); providing distance-learning classrooms (2.80 Mean/1.17 Sd.); and changing classroom sizes (2.79 Mean/1.08 Sd.).

Effectiveness of External Activities

Table 7 shows the scores each external activity received on effectiveness. 77.8% of respondents felt that encouraging visits and guests lectures was “extremely effective” or very effective (4.13 Mean/.87 Sd.). 68.3% believed identifying corporations as potential

Table 7. Effectiveness of External Activities^a

Activity	Extremely effective	Very	Somewhat effective	A little effective	Not effective
Encouraged visits/guest lectures (n=45) ^b					
Frequency	18	17	8	2	0
Percent	40.0	37.8	17.8	4.4	0.0
Mean/Sd	4.13/.87				
Identified corporations for graduate recruiting (n=41) ^b					
Frequency	15	13	10	2	1
Percent	36.6	31.7	24.4	4.9	2.4

Mean/Sd	3.95/1.02					
Revised college brochures (n=43) ^b						
Frequency		12	16	11	3	1
Percent		27.9	37.2	25.6	7.0	2.3
Mean/Sd	3.81/1.01					
Relationships with high schools (n=44) ^b						
Frequency		10	18	12	3	1
Percent		22.7	40.9	27.3	6.8	2.3
Mean/Sd	3.75/.97					
Periodic press releases (n=41) ^b						
Frequency		8	16	11	3	3
Percent		19.5	39.0	26.8	7.3	7.3
Mean/Sd	3.56/1.12					
Relationships with local media (n=44) ^b						
Frequency		4	13	14	10	3
Percent		9.1	29.5	31.8	22.7	6.8
Mean/Sd	3.11/1.08					
Frequent interaction with public relations department (n=43) ^b						
Frequency		4	10	17	7	5
Percent		9.3	23.3	39.5	16.3	11.6
Mean/Sd	3.02/1.12					
Direct-mail for corporations (n=40) ^b						
Frequency		1	11	13	10	5
Percent		2.5	27.5	32.5	25.0	12.5
Mean/Sd	2.83/1.06					

^aScale ranges from 5=extremely effective to 1=not effective.

^bn denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

recruiters for students graduating from the program would be “extremely effective” or “very effective” (3.95 Mean/1.02 Sd.). Revising college brochures was also seen as a very effective activity rating a 3.81 mean (1.01 Sd.). Relationships with high schools ranked 3.75 as a mean with a standard deviation of .97.

Periodic press releases (3.56 Mean/1.12 Sd.); relationships with local media (3.11 Mean/1.08 Sd.); and frequent interaction with the university’s public relations department (3.02 Mean/1.12 Sd.) rated “somewhat effective” as a way of increasing knowledge of the program. Direct-mail for corporations scored at 2.83 as a mean and had a standard deviation of 1.06.

Effectiveness of Tools

The effectiveness ratings of different tools available for marketing are shown in Table 8. An electronic brochure or Web page received the highest overall rating at 3.93 as a mean and .99 as a standard deviation. 75.5% of respondents felt that a Web page was “extremely effective” or “very effective.” Direct-mail for potential students also ranked very high with 3.88 as a mean and .93 as a standard deviation. 72.1% felt it was “extremely effective” or “very effective” in attracting students.

The use of a recruiting video (3.13 Mean/1.08 Sd.); posters or flyers for high schools (3.07 Mean/1.05 Sd.); and a recruiting cd (2.95 Mean/1.10 Sd.) all ranked as “somewhat effective.” 19.0% of respondents felt that the use of a newspaper was “not effective,” although its mean score was 2.50 and its standard deviation was .97. Only one respondent for either retail displays or television felt that these activities were “extremely effective.” Retail displays received a mean score of 2.37 (1.07 Sd.) and television received a mean score of 2.33 (1.37 Sd.). Only 12.5% and 12.8% of respondents for radio and

Table 8. Effectiveness of Tools^a

Activity	Extremely effective	Very	Somewhat effective	A little	Not effective
Electronic brochure/Web page (n=45) ^b					
Frequency	14	20	5	6	0
Percent	31.1	44.4	11.1	13.3	0.0
Mean/Sd	3.93/.99				
Direct-mail for potential students (n=43) ^b					
Frequency	11	20	9	2	1
Percent	25.6	46.5	20.9	4.7	2.3
Mean/Sd	3.88/.93				
Recruiting video (n=39) ^b					
Frequency	4	9	18	4	4
Percent	10.3	23.1	46.2	10.3	10.3
Mean/Sd	3.13/1.08				

Posters/flyers for high schools (n=42) ^b						
Frequency		3	11	15	10	3
Percent		7.1	26.2	35.7	23.8	7.1
Mean/Sd	3.07/1.05					
Recruiting cd (n=39) ^b						
Frequency		3	8	17	6	5
Percent		7.7	20.5	43.6	15.4	12.8
Mean/Sd	2.95/1.10					
Newspaper (n=42) ^b						
Frequency		0	6	17	11	8
Percent		0.0	14.3	40.5	26.2	19.0
Mean/Sd	2.50/.97					
Retail displays (n=41) ^b						
Frequency		1	5	12	13	10
Percent		2.4	12.2	29.3	37.7	24.4
Mean/Sd	2.37/1.07					
Television (n=40) ^b						
Frequency		1	7	9	10	13
Percent		2.5	17.5	22.5	25.0	32.5
Mean/Sd	2.33/1.19					

^aScale ranges from 5=extremely effective to 1=not effective.

^bn denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 8 continued. Effectiveness of Tools^a

Activity	Extremely effective	Very	Somewhat effective	A little	Not effective
Radio (n=40)^b					
Frequency	0	5	11	11	13
Percent	0.0	12.5	27.5	27.5	32.5
Mean/Sd	2.20/1.04				
Magazine (n=39)^b					
Frequency	0	5	9	13	12
Percent	0.0	12.8	23.1	33.3	30.8
Mean/Sd	2.18/1.02				
Billboard (n=41)^b					
Frequency	0	3	11	13	14
Percent	0.0	7.3	26.8	31.7	34.1
Mean/Sd	2.07/.96				
Telemarketing (n=38)^b					
Frequency	2	2	5	13	16
Percent	5.3	5.3	13.2	34.2	42.1
Mean/Sd	1.97/1.13				

^aScale ranges from 5=extremely effective to 1=not effective.

^bn denotes the number of respondents who answered the question.

magazines, respectively, felt that these activities were “very effective” and not one respondent considered radio, magazines, or billboards (2.07 Mean/.96 Sd.) to be “extremely effective.” Telemarketing was considered ineffective by 42.1% of respondents, although four respondents felt that it was either “very effective” or “extremely effective.”

Comparison of Demographics with Growth

In order to understand whether individual factors had an effect on the growth of enrollments for hospitality and tourism programs, each demographic and variable in the study were compared to growth using crosstabs in SPSS. This analysis would demonstrate whether or not there was any difference in enrollments between programs who were actually using the various marketing strategies and those who were not. Since the number of programs experiencing growth was the same as those who were not experiencing growth, the differences between the two groups would be easy to see. Only the frequencies are shown in each of the charts since the variations between groups is slight in most cases (within one or two counts). Percentages were also omitted since the total number of respondents (when broken into the four categories) is fairly limited.

Chart 1 shows the correlation between whether the program was located in a rural or an urban setting and growth in the enrollments of the program over five years. 26 of the respondents' programs were located in a rural setting, while 20 were in an urban setting. 13 in the rural setting and 10 in the urban setting saw growth, while 13 rural and 10 urban programs did not see growth. Chart 2 shows that a greater number (16) of public schools saw growth than those that did not see growth. On the other hand, fewer private schools saw growth than did not.

Chart 1. Compare Location with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
location	Rural	13	13	26
	Urban	10	10	20
Total		23	23	46

Chart 2. Compare Type with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
type	Public	16	13	29
	Private	7	10	17
Total		23	23	46

In Charts 3 and 4, the numbers of students enrolled at each university or college and in each program are combined into categories to simplify comparison. Of the universities whose enrollments were below 20,000, half of the programs saw growth (9) and half did not (9) (Chart 3). For universities over 20,000, 2 programs saw growth while 7 did not. For program enrollments (Chart 4), the numbers of those whose programs experienced growth and those who did not was split fairly evenly in all categories.

Chart 3. Compare Number in University/College with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
number in university/college	0-9,999	9	9	18
	10,000-19,999	8	7	15
	20,000-29,999	2	7	9
	30,000-39,999	2	0	2
Total		21	23	44

Chart 4. Compare Number in Program with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
number in program	0-99	9	11	20
	100-199	7	5	15
	200-299	3	4	7
	300-399	0	0	0
	400-499	0	2	2

	500-599	1	1	2
	600+	3	0	3
Total		23	23	46

Comparison of Factors with Growth

When comparing programs who had a strategic plan for marketing with those who did not (Chart 5), the numbers appeared to be very balanced. Of the 29 who had a plan that was separate from their university's marketing plan, 14 saw growth and 15 did not. Of the 11 who said their program did not have a separate plan, 6 saw growth and 5 did not. Half of those developing this type of plan (3) saw growth, while half (3) did not.

Chart 5. Compare Plan for Recruiting with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
plan for recruiting	Yes	14	15	29
	No	6	5	11
	Developing one	3	3	6
Total		23	23	46

Only one program had a full-time marketing director (Chart 6). This program did see growth in the number of students enrolled in their program over the past five years. The program who utilized a consulting company did not see growth (Chart 7). Of those who utilized marketing research, 5 programs had growth and 5 did not (Chart 8). 36 of the programs attested that they do not use marketing research, but half of these (18) saw growth and half (18) did not.

Chart 6. Compare Marketing Director with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
marketing director	Yes	1	No	1
	No	22	23	45
Total		23	23	46

Chart 7. Compare Consulting Company with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
consulting company	Yes	Yes	No	1
	No	23	22	45
Total		23	23	46

Chart 8. Compare Marketing Research with Growth:

		overall growth		Total
marketing research	Yes	5	No	5
	No	18	18	36
Total		23	23	46

Comparison of Internal Activities with Growth

Charts 9 through 19 compare internal activities with program enrollment growth. Several of the categories saw more dramatic differences between those who were using the activity and whether they had growth in enrollments. For example, 13 programs who had “updated computer equipment” saw an increase in enrollments while 9 did not see growth (Chart 11). 14 of those who had not updated their equipment or labs did not see growth, while 10 of the programs did grow in size.

The activities showing the greatest difference between categories are “provided more multimedia” (Chart 9) and “revised or updated curriculum” (Chart 10), with a difference of five between the group using the activity and experiencing growth and those not experiencing growth. Three activities had a difference of four in the number of programs using the activities and their growth: “updated computer equipment” (Chart 11); “developed newsletter/calendar for students” (Chart 12); and “sponsored informal student/faculty events” (Chart 13). “Developed network links for students” (Chart 14) and “changed class enrollment sizes” (Chart 15) had a difference of three between those who were experiencing growth and those who were not. “Sponsored career fairs” (Chart 16), “distance-learning classrooms” (Chart 17), and “opened satellite locations for classes” (Chart 18) had a difference of one or two only between programs who were using the activities and growing or decreasing in size.

For each activity, a greater number of programs who were using them experienced growth than those who were not using them. Similarly, a greater number of those not using each activity experienced a decline in their enrollments. The exception to this is “tracked program graduates” (Chart 19).

Chart 9. Provided more multimedia

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
more multimedia	Using	11	6	17
	Not Using	12	17	29
Total		23	23	46

Chart 10. Revised/updated curriculum

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
curriculum change	Using	16	11	27
	Not Using	7	12	19
Total		23	23	46

Chart 11. Updated computer equipment/labs

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
computer equipment	Using	13	9	22
	Not Using	10	14	24
Total		23	23	46

Chart 12. Developed newsletters/calendars for students

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
student newsletter	Using	7	3	10
	Not Using	16	20	36

Total		23	23	46
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Chart 13. Sponsored informal student/faculty events

		overall growth		Total
informal events	Using	Yes 12	No 8	20
	Not Using	11	15	26
Total		23	23	46

Chart 14. Developed network links for students

		overall growth		Total
network links	Using	Yes 12	No 9	21
	Not Using	11	14	25
Total		23	23	46

Chart 15. Changed class enrollment sizes

		overall growth		Total
changed class sizes	Using	Yes 5	No 2	7
	Not Using	18	21	39
Total		23	23	46

Chart 16. Sponsored career fairs

		overall growth		Total
career fairs	Using	Yes 11	No 10	21
	Not Using	12	13	25
Total		23	23	46

Chart 17. Provided distance-learning classrooms

		overall growth		Total
distance-learning	Using	Yes 6	No 4	10
	Not Using	17	19	36
Total		23	23	46

Chart 18. Opened satellite locations for classes

		overall growth		Total
satellite locations	Using	Yes 3	No 2	5
	Not Using	20	21	41
Total		23	23	46

Chart 19. Tracked program graduates

		overall growth		Total
tracked graduates	Using	Yes 4	No 7	11
	Not Using	19	16	35
Total		23	23	46

In Charts 20 through 27, the external activities being used by hospitality programs are compared to whether the programs are experiencing growth in enrollments. Those who had developed “relationships with local media” had the highest amount of difference between groups—a difference of seven between those seeing growth and those who were not (Chart 20). A difference of six was seen between those who “revised college brochures” and were seeing growth or not seeing growth (Chart 21). “Encouraged visits/guest lectures” showed a difference of four (Chart 22). Of those using “periodic press releases” (Chart 23) and cultivating “relationships with high schools” (Chart 24), the differences between the groups was three. “Direct-mail databases for corporations” (Chart 25), “frequent interactions with public relations department” (Chart 26), and “identified corporations for graduate recruiting” (Chart 27), all saw a difference of one between groups.

For the comparisons of external activities to growth, in every single category the number of those were using the activity and had growth was higher than the number of those who were using it and not seeing growth. Also, the number of those who did not experience growth and were not using the activity was higher than the number of those who were using it and not experiencing growth.

Chart 20. Relationships with local media

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
local media	Using	11	4	15
	Not Using	12	19	31
Total		23	23	46

Chart 21. Revised college brochures

		overall growth		Total
		Yes	No	
revised brochures	Using	17	11	28
	Not Using	6	12	18
Total		23	23	46

Chart 22. Encouraged visits/guest lectures

		overall growth		Total
visits/guest lectures	Using	Yes 18	No 14	32
	Not Using	5	9	14
Total		23	23	46

Chart 23. Periodic press releases

		overall growth		Total
press releases	Using	Yes 10	No 7	17
	Not Using	13	16	29
Total		23	23	46

Chart 24. Relationships with high schools

		overall growth		Total
high schools	Using	Yes 15	No 12	27
	Not Using	8	11	19
Total		23	23	46

Chart 25. Direct-mail databases for corporations

		overall growth		Total
corporate direct-mail	Using	Yes 4	No 3	7
	Not Using	19	20	39
Total		23	23	46

Chart 26. Frequent interaction with public relations department

		overall growth		Total
interact PR dept	Using	Yes 7	No 6	13
	Not Using	16	17	33
Total		23	23	46

Chart 27. Identified corporations for graduate recruiting

		overall growth		Total
corporate recruiting	Using	Yes 11	No 10	21
	Not Using	12	13	25
Total		23	23	46

Comparison of Tools with Growth

The last twelve charts, Chart 28 through 39, compare the tools being used with the growth or decline of enrollments. A difference of five was seen between those used “direct-mail for potential students” and experienced growth and those who did not (Chart 28). The use of radio saw a difference of three—the three programs who used it all experienced growth in their enrollments (Chart 29). Use of an “electronic brochure or Web page” (Chart 30) and “posters or flyers for high schools” (Chart 31) showed a

difference of two between those using it and experiencing growth and the programs not seeing growth. “Retail displays” (Chart 32), “television” (Chart 33), “magazines” (Chart 34), “billboards” (Chart 35), and “telemarketing” (Chart 36) saw a difference of one. Television, magazines, or billboards were only being used by one program in the study. There was no difference between groups for “recruiting video” (Chart 30) or for “recruiting cd” (Chart 31).

The pattern seen in the last two sections was repeated in this section, but to a much smaller degree—most of the activities being used did correlate with growth and not using activities did correlate with seeing a decline in enrollments, but only slightly. For example, most activities only had a difference of two or one. However, most programs only used a few of the tools, and therefore only small differences would be possible between groups. Use of “newspapers” as a marketing tool was the exception to the trend—of the seven programs using newspapers to advertise their program, three saw growth, while four saw a decline over the past five years (Chart 39).

Chart 28. Direct-mail for potential students

		overall growth		Total
direct mail students	Using	Yes 14	No 9	23
	Not Using	9	14	23
Total		23	23	46

Chart 29. Radio

		overall growth		Total
radio	Using	Yes 3	No	3
	Not Using	20	23	43
Total		23	23	46

Chart 30. Electronic brochure/Web page

		overall growth		Total
Web page	Using	Yes 15	No 13	28
	Not Using	8	10	18
Total		23	23	46

Chart 31. Posters/flyers for high schools

		overall growth		Total
posters/ flyers	Using	Yes 7	No 5	12
	Not Using	16	18	34
Total		23	23	46

Chart 32. Retail displays

		overall growth		Total
retail displays	Using	Yes 3	No 2	5
	Not Using	20	21	41
Total		23	23	46

Chart 33. Television

		overall growth		Total
Television	Using	Yes 1	No 0	1
	Not Using	22	23	45
Total		23	23	46

Chart 34. Magazines

		overall growth		Total
magazines	Using	Yes 1	No 0	1
	Not Using	22	23	45
Total		23	23	46

Chart 35. Billboard

		overall growth		Total
billboard	Using	Yes 1	No 0	1
	Not Using	22	23	45
Total		23	23	46

Chart 36. Telemarketing

		overall growth		Total
tele-marketing	Using	Yes 2	No 1	3
	Not Using	21	22	43
Total		23	23	46

Chart 37. Recruiting video

		overall growth		Total
recruiting video	Using	Yes 4	No 4	8
	Not Using	19	19	38
Total		23	23	46

Chart 38. Recruiting CD

		overall growth		Total
recruiting CD	Using	Yes 1	No 1	2
	Not Using	22	22	44
Total		23	23	46

Chart 39. Newspaper

		overall growth		Total
newspaper	Using	Yes 3	No 4	7
	Not Using	20	19	39
Total		23	23	46

SUMMARY

Chapter Four demonstrates how the results of the interviews and survey answer the objectives of the study by identifying the marketing strategies being used by hospitality and tourism programs. The effectiveness of these methods was judged on according to the opinions of those being interviewed and the survey respondents, and upon whether programs using each marketing strategy experienced a decline or increase in their enrollments over the past five years.

The interviews helped to lay a foundation for the reasons behind the declines and provided a better understanding of the issues facing hospitality and tourism programs. Several of the interviewees agreed that factors outside of the program are having the greatest influence on the number of students enrolling in hospitality programs, such as the economy and fewer numbers of students going into the hospitality industry. However, all of them feel that it is extremely important to tap into a variety of methods to draw more students to the program and to continue analyzing the needs and direction of the marketplace.

The data from the survey will help educators to recognize what marketing strategies are most effective in recruiting students. This is the focus of the third objective—to provide educators with more information to enable them to make intelligent choices about their marketing efforts.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter begins with a review of the statement of the problem and the research objectives along with a summary of the procedures used to complete the study. The findings are summarized and discussed in reference to previous literature as seen in Chapter Two. Conclusions and recommendations are made based on these findings.

Statement of the Problem

Hospitality and Tourism programs around the United States are facing dramatic declines in their enrollments. The decline will not only affect the quality of education for colleges and universities, but will also have an effect on the rapidly expanding hospitality and tourism industry. Educators need to find better ways to market their programs in order to successfully recruit greater numbers of students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to identify the marketing strategies currently being used by hospitality and tourism programs around the United States. The researcher sought to determine whether the activities being used have been effective in attracting more students to the programs. The researcher also wished to contribute more information on hospitality education marketing strategies in order to help educators to make informed and intelligent choices on where to direct their marketing efforts.

These objectives have been met in several ways. First, the researcher utilized the literature review to gain knowledge about previous studies on marketing and educational programs and to establish a framework for understanding the issues. Second, personal interviews were conducted to gain a better understanding of the enrollments problems being faced by hospitality and tourism programs. Third, a detailed questionnaire was distributed to hospitality and tourism educators around the United States to determine what methods their programs were using and to gain their opinions on the effectiveness of these strategies. The effectiveness of each strategy was also judged on how many of the programs actually using each activity experienced growth over the past five years. It is hoped that educators will find the information useful in increasing enrollments of their programs.

Major Findings

The first section of the survey covered the demographic information of the respondents' programs. 56% of the programs were located in a rural area, while 43% were located in an urban setting. There was no difference in enrollment growth by location. 63% of the programs were part of a public institution and 37% were part of a private institution. There was little difference in growth between programs in a public or private institution, between large or small programs, or between programs located in larger universities or smaller institutions.

63% of programs had a strategic plan for marketing that was separate from their university's plan, 13% were developing one, 23.9% did not have a separate plan. There was no difference in growth between those who had a plan and those who did not or were developing one, contrary to Bush's recommendation that having such a plan would be extremely beneficial in recruiting students (1998). There was also no difference in growth between those who were using marketing research and those who were not, contrary to Rienerth's suggestion that this would have a significant impact upon enrollments (1999).

Only one program used a consulting company, so it was impossible to tell if this made any difference in growth, although Lords and Gose strongly suggest that use of a consulting company would have a positive effect on enrollment (2000; 1999). "Success of previous graduates" and "image" were used the most widely used campaign themes. Cost was not used by any programs. However, Davies suggests that this might be a useful strategy for schools whose tuition is low, such as the University of Wisconsin-Stout (interview, 2001).

The effectiveness of the marketing strategies was judged according to the perceptions of the survey respondents and upon whether programs using each marketing strategy experienced a decline or increase in their enrollments over the past five years.

The highest ranking internal activities were "revised curriculum," "updated computer equipment or labs," and "sponsored career fairs." Rienerth suggests that revising or updating curriculum to be more "applied" or vocational in nature will be most beneficial when the economy reaches a low point and students return to college (1999). The internal activities that scored the lowest in terms of use, perceived effectiveness, and growth were "provided distance-learning classrooms," "changed class enrollment sizes," and "offered satellite locations for classes."

“Encouraged visits or guest lectures” and “revised college brochures” were ranked highest for external activities. “Frequent interaction with the public relations department” and “direct-mail databases for corporations” were felt to be the least effective and were used least often by any of the programs. “Relationships with local media” showed the greatest difference between those who were using the strategy and those who were not, the highest positive correlation to growth of any of the activities or tools.

The marketing tools that were rated the most effective, that were used most frequently, and that correlated most often with growth were use of an “electronic brochure or Web page,” “direct-mail for students,” and “posters or flyers for high schools.” Several authors stress the importance of a Web page and online applications for students as recruiting tools (Roach 1999; Terrell 1999; Hartigan 2000). The tools rated lowest in effectiveness and used least often were “television,” “magazines,” and “billboards.”

Conclusions

The situation being faced by Hospitality and Tourism programs is caused by several related factors, such as a changing economy and job market, less value being placed on education in general, and increased competition from other programs. The solution to the problem can only be found through identifying the strategies being used by programs that are facing growth and decline, and analyzing which strategies are actually helping to increase enrollments. The educators who were interviewed addressed several of the important issues, such as the impact that continued declines will have on the quality of education and upon the hospitality industry.

Several of the interviewees suggested that students do not realize the value of a four-year degree, especially when the economy is doing well. They also suggested that industry is not doing much to send students back to school since there is such a demand for workers. These findings suggest that programs should focus their marketing efforts less on “image” and more on the benefits of a college degree, such as increased chances for advancement and promotions and greater job security.

Technology is seen by several of the interviewees to be a key in marketing their university, a conclusion that is strongly supported by the findings of the study and by previous research. Specifically, the use of a Web page, multimedia, network links, and updated computer equipment or labs appear to be effective in marketing the programs to students.

In general, the external activities were seen to be most effective, with higher mean scores and higher correlations between the activity and the number of programs experiencing growth. This is logical, since greater amounts of contact with potential students through visits and brochures would create awareness of the program and establish a relationship with students. Interviewees felt that visits to high schools and personal interaction with students had been very beneficial in the past, but felt that these efforts were too time-consuming. Internal activities that provided students with obvious benefits, such as career fairs, updated computer equipment, and revising curriculum to meet the needs of a changing market, appear to have the most effect on increases in enrollment.

Recommendations

The educators who were interviewed made several suggestions based on their own experiences and understanding of the issues about how hospitality programs might increase their enrollments. Several of their suggestions, along with those from the findings and conclusions of the study, are included:

1. Hospitality programs should focus their efforts on building awareness of the benefits of a college degree, specifically a four-year degree in hospitality and tourism.
2. Hospitality programs can work to develop relationships with employers in the industry. This will not only help to create networks for students to find jobs after graduation, but will also build up the credibility of education within the industry.
3. Programs should make use of a Web page and online application forms that can be found quickly and easily by potential students.
4. Greater numbers of online classes and programs should be available to students. This will not only increase convenience for students, but will greatly increase the geographic area of their market.
5. Programs may be developed for employees already in the hospitality industry, such as an “executive management program” for employees who lack formal education.
6. Methods should be developed for their professors and current students to be in contact with prospective students, such as college fairs or “college days” for high school students.
7. Hospitality programs can send brochures to students currently at their university who are undecided in their major.

8. Hospitality programs can make greater use of direct-mail, especially to parents of students graduating from high school.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Demographics

- How long have you been here at Stout?
- What is your background as it relates to enrollment or to marketing research?

2. Problem

- What does the environment of college enrollment look like right now?
- What is Stout's enrollment versus the national enrollment?
- What are the reasons for the decline?

3. Significance

- What is the significance of this problem?
- How has the decline affected your department?

4. Reaction

- What measures has your department used to combat this problem and draw more students into the H & T program?
- Which strategies do you feel have been most effective?

5. Future

- What predictions would you make about the enrollment situation?
- What new strategies would you be interested in seeing Stout use?

APPENDIX B
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**CURRENT MARKETING STRATEGIES BEING USED BY
HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES**

1. Your school location: Rural Urban
2. Your school type: Public Private
3. Number of undergraduate students enrolled at your university/college: _____
4. Number of undergraduate students enrolled in Hospitality/Tourism program: _____
5. Has your program experienced overall enrollment growth in the past five years?
Yes No Don't know
6. Does your program have a strategic plan for undergraduate recruiting which is separate from that of the university as a whole? Yes No Developing one
7. Does your program have a full-time marketing director? Yes No
8. Does your program utilize a consulting service/company? Yes No
9. Does your program utilize marketing research? Yes No
10. If yes, what types of marketing research? How often?

Please circle the number that describes whether or not you feel the marketing activity is "very effective" or "not effective." Place a check mark next to the activities/tools your program is currently using.

	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Extremely effective	Using now		
11. Updated computer equipment/labs	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Revised/updated curriculum in past five years	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Sponsored career fairs each semester	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Tracked business school graduates	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Developed network links for students	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Changed class enrollment sizes	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Developed newsletters/ calendars for students	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Provided distance-learning classrooms	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Provided more multimedia	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Opened satellite locations for classes	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Sponsored informal student/ faculty events	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Not effective		Somewhat effective		Extremely effective	Using now
22. Encouraged visits/guest lectures	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Revised college brochures	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Direct-mail databases for corporations	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Periodic press releases	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
26. Frequent interaction with public relations department	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
27. Relationships with high schools	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Identified corporations for graduate recruiting	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Relationships with local media ¹	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	
30. Electronic brochure/Web page	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
31. Retail displays	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
32. Posters/flyers for high schools	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
33. Direct-mail for potential students	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
34. Recruiting video	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
35. Recruiting CD	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
36. Newspaper	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
37. Radio	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
38. Television	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
39. Magazine	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
40. Billboard	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
41. Telemarketing	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
42. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
43. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

44. If your program has advertised separately from the general college advertising, what campaign theme was used most often? (Please choose only one.)

Image Location Cost Success of previous graduates Other _____

Thank you! Please return this form in the enclosed pre-addressed stamped envelope.

** I understand that by returning this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small, and that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. Survey and envelope coding is for the sole purpose of ensuring demographic population. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

NOTE: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher or research advisor and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone (715)232-1126.

APPENDIX C

SURVEY COVER LETTER

February 16, 2001

Mr. F. E. Wise
Chair, Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management
University of D_____
321 S. College Avenue
New York, NY 12345

Dear Mr. Wise:

A recognized phenomenon is the drop in the number of students attending college over the next decade and in turn, a decline in the number of students enrolling in Hospitality and Tourism programs. On the other hand, there is a growing need for professionals in the Hospitality and Tourism industry. This “catch twenty-two” means that Hospitality and Tourism programs will have to work harder and make more intelligent choices when it comes to recruiting students.

As a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, I am conducting a study on the marketing strategies currently being used by Hospitality and Tourism programs. The study will provide relevant and timely information that can assist Hospitality and Tourism educators to successfully recruit and retain students to their respective programs.

I am asking that you take five minutes of your time to assist me with this research endeavor. Your input is essential and invaluable to me. Please complete the enclosed survey and return it to me by **March 12, 2001**. Your response is anonymous and voluntary. A summary of the results will be sent to you upon request.

I greatly appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you. Please contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,

Joseph Holland
Chair, Hospitality and Tourism Department

Brian Bergquist
Thesis Advisor, Hospitality and Tourism Department

Christina Piguet
Graduate Student, Hospitality and Tourism Management Program