

Ohio Tourism Industry Training Needs Assessment

National Extension Tourism Conference

Galveston, TX

October 2015



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Tourism Industry Context: Size & Scope

- \$40 billion industry in Ohio
- 200 million visitors annually
- Supports about 412,000 jobs



Tourism Industry Context: Existing Education

- Tourism jobs require a variety of skills
- On-the-job and online education opportunities
- Workforce trends indicate upward shifts in the number of jobs an individual expects to hold in their lifetime

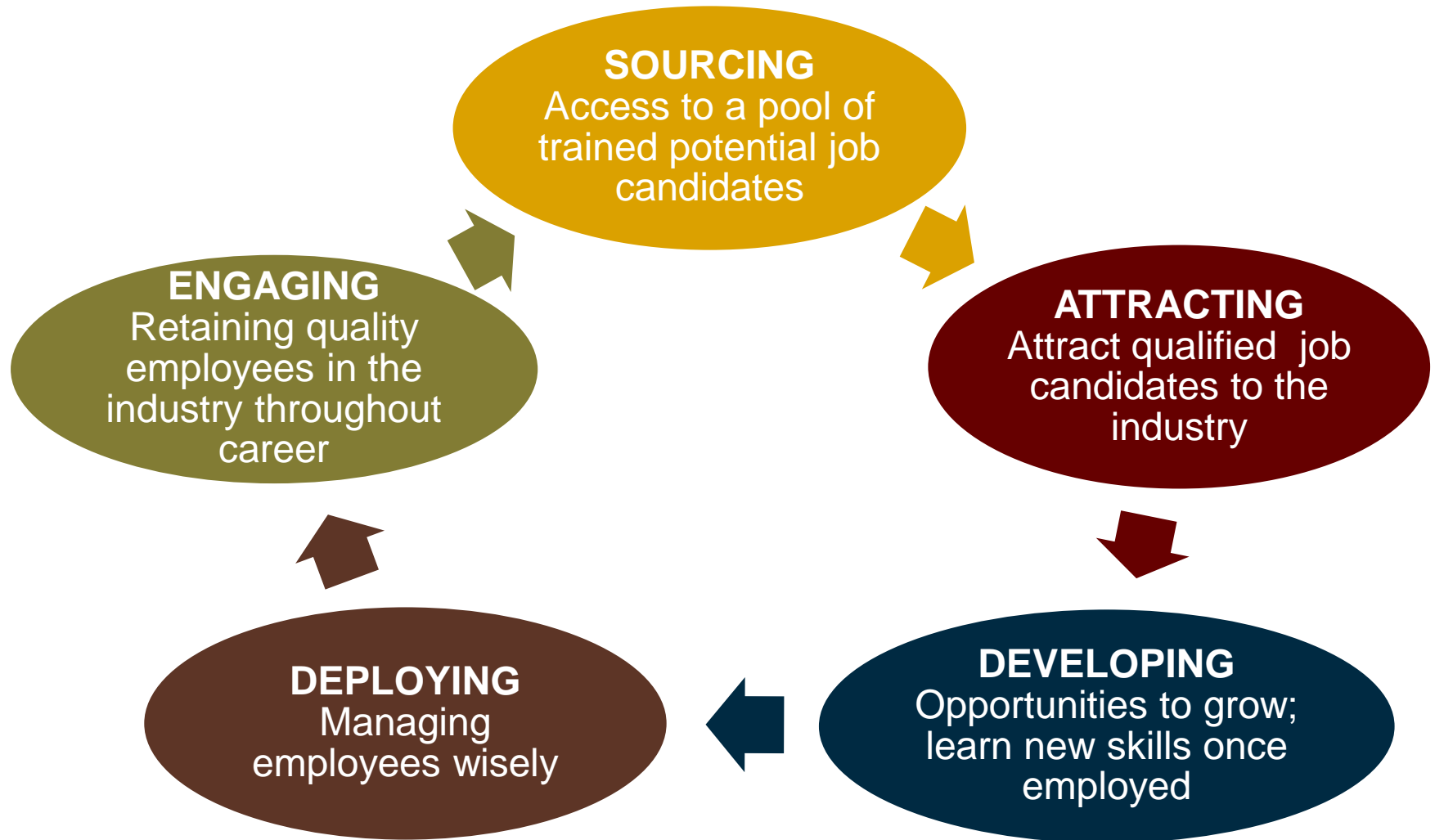


Workforce Trends

	20 TH CENTURY	21 ST CENTURY
Number of jobs expected to hold in a lifetime	1 to 2 jobs	10 to 15 jobs (SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor)
Job Requirements	Mastery of one field and subject	Simultaneous mastery of many rapidly changing fields and subjects
Job Competition	Local	Global
Work Model	Routine, hands-on, hierarchical, fact-based	Non-routine, technical, creative, interactive
Education Model	Institution centered, formal degree attainment is primary goal	Learner-centered, self-directed, lifelong learning is primary goal
Organization Culture	Top down	Multi-directional (bottom-up, top down, side-to-side, etc.)

*Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2009

Talent Management Approach



Project Objectives



Ohio Travel
ASSOCIATION

- Identify industry competency and training needs
- Identify existing levels of competency
- Identify existing research and training or education programs
- Identify competency and training or education gaps



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Research Methodology

**IRB
PROCESS**

**LITERATURE
REVIEW**

**EXISTING
CONDITIONS-
Training &
Education**

**ONLINE
SURVEY**

**FOCUS
GROUPS**



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On-Line Survey

- 163 tourism industry representatives responded
- Four categories (CVB's, attractions, lodging, other)
- 36 questions about workforce needs
- Collected demographics

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Ohio Travel
ASSOCIATION

Ohio Tourism Industry Training Needs Survey

Communications

11%

Please indicate the importance of the following skills and abilities with regard to employment in your sector of the tourism/hospitality industry.

	Unimportant	Important	Extremely Important
Written communications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Decision-making skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negotiation skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Problem-solving skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Conflict resolution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Foreign language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Focus Groups

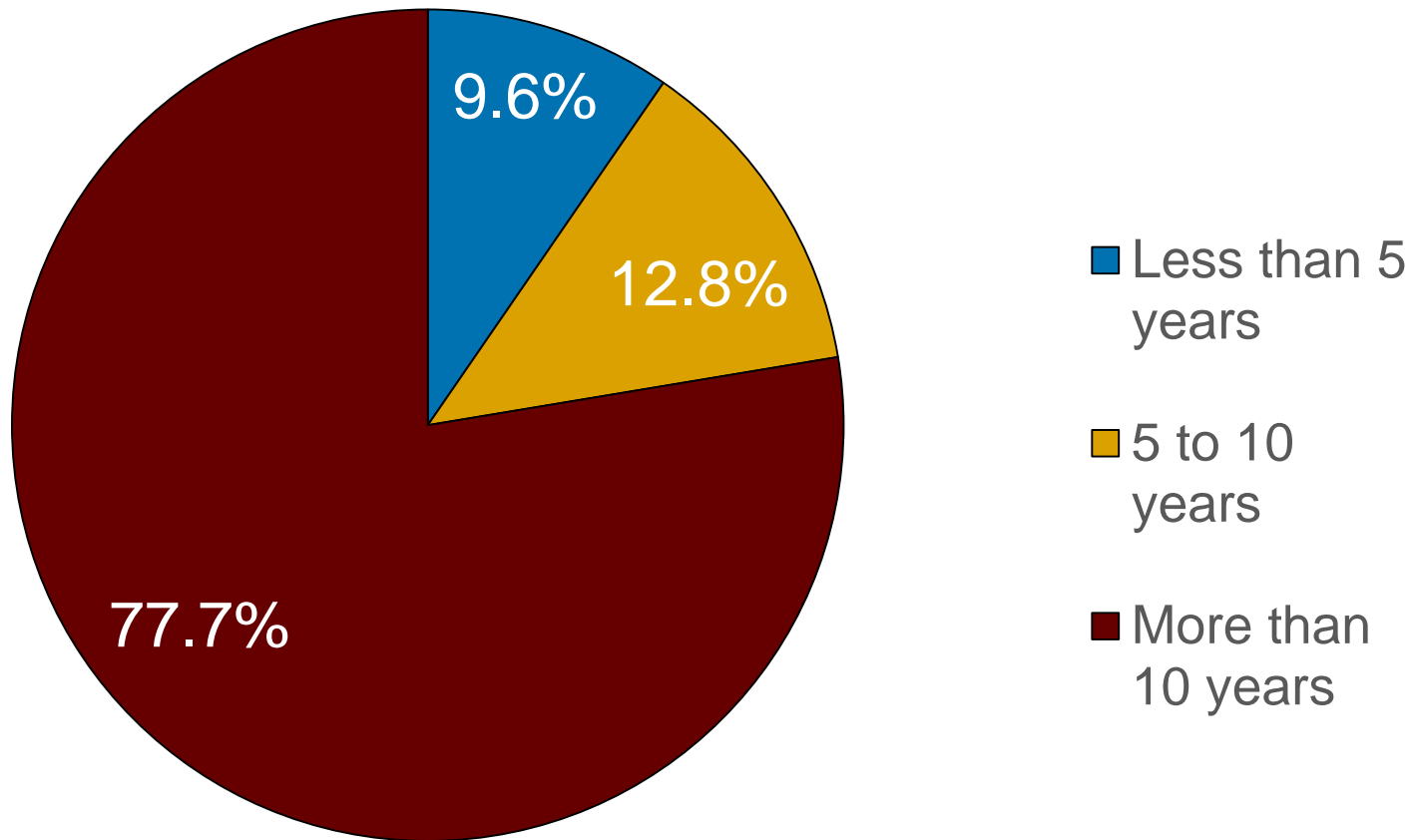
- 60 participants (front-line employees)
- **4 Locations:**
 - Cleveland, Toledo, Dayton, Columbus
 - Round Robin
 - 7 questions



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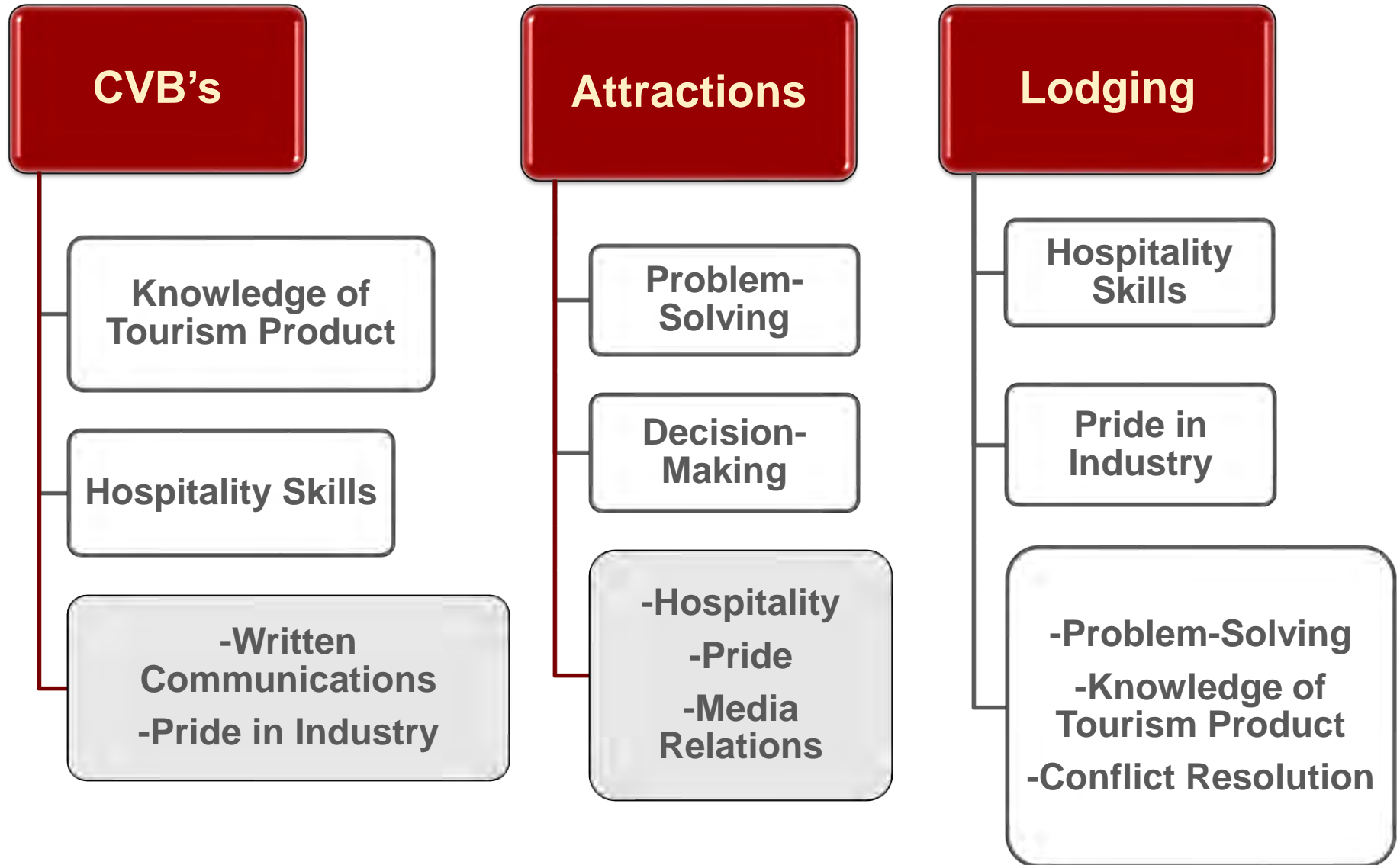
Results: Years Worked in the Tourism Industry



Results: Top Five Tourism Industry Skills

Skill	% Importance of Skill to Industry	% Competent or Highly Skilled
Decision-making	100%	87%
Problem-solving	100%	82%
Written communication	99%	84%
Conflict resolution	97%	67%
Negotiation skills	89%	70%

Results: Most Important Skills by Sector Category



Results: Training Providers

Training Providers	Percentage Used
Company/business	60%
OTA	52%
Professional conference	47%
Other state trade association	30%



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Focus Group Questions

- Skills needed
- Biggest challenges in job
- Skills developed since on the job/in the position
- Training participated in
- Was it beneficial
- Best way to take advantage of training opportunities
- Ideas for training to help do the job

Focus Group Observations

Challenges: They often feel unsupported by management and powerless to adequately handle customer service issues

Front line employees are the brand – they create the experience for the visitor

They need trained mentors to provide wisdom, guidance and support

They are often put into supervisory positions without adequate training

“Customer service and hospitality are both an art and a science”

Progress

- The Ohio Travel Association (OTA) shared research findings with:
 - More than 120 tourism businesses
 - 8 academic programs offering hospitality and tourism certifications and degrees
 - Ohio Department of Education for the revision of statewide high school/postsecondary learning standards
- OTA established a committee of tourism industry leaders to refine and pursue short term recommendations
- OTA is seeking funding to conduct a feasibility study to assess an educational concept based on demonstrated needs

Recommendations

1. Develop a stackable curriculum
 - Independent modules that can be bundled, if needed
2. Leverage industry and education partners
3. Establish competency-based certificates
 - Recognized and defined by industry partners
4. Demonstrate a tourism career pathway
 - Roadmap for career advancement – holistic view
5. Offer incentives
6. Introduce a work-based learning model
 - For front-line employees and management – mentoring, shadowing

What Worked

- Collaborative public/private partnership
- Piloted survey with tourism industry and business leaders
- Variety of data collection techniques
- Inclusion of frontline employee perspectives
- Focus group meetings held in geographic locations around Ohio
- Follow-up by tourism partner with key education and industry partners



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Challenges Moving Forward

- Implementation funding
 - Tourism industry doesn't qualify for typical workforce development funding
- Recognition of tourism as economic driver
- Recognized need for a continuous improvement process for employees
- Overcoming perception of tourism jobs as terminal positions – not part of a career path
- The loss of high performing tourism employees to other business sectors



“The success of the tourism industry is dependent on the quality of the personnel who deliver, operate and manage the tourist product.”

Chishamiso & Chipfupa, 2013



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Questions?

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