Introduction to the Employer Programme for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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Perceptual Gap Between Higher Education and Industry

According to a study conducted by Gallup for Inside Higher Ed. "What Americans Need to Know about Higher Education" (Gallup Lumina Foundation,2013):

- **96%** of **chief academic officers** claimed to be "extremely or somewhat confident" that their institutions are preparing students for success in the workforce.

- **11%** of **employer representatives** said they believe that graduates have the skills and competencies needed by their business. *(1)*

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – Overview..

- Employer engagement in HE is not a road covered with roses
- Closer in professional/vocational higher education
- Closer in countries with liberal political systems or with tradition in vocational education
- The Bologna Process
  - Series of ministerial meetings and agreements 1999-2009
  - Designed to ensure comparability in the standards of quality of higher education qualifications
  - Created a European Higher Education Area

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – ..Overview

- Increasing employability as a main objective - orienting higher education to employment
- Higher education institutions as open systems engaging stakeholders – employers

◉ Qualification changes in both industry and academia

◉ The evolution of the HR function

◉ The effects of the economic crisis
- For youth
- For businesses
- For higher education

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – Definitions..

- it describes a process through which young persons engage with employers under the auspices of their educational institution with the aim of influencing their educational achievement, engagement and/or progression out of education into ultimate employment

- the activities which commonly connect employers and their employees with educational institutions and their students

(Mann and McKeown,2015) (2)

Employer Engagement in Higher Education - ..Definitions

- **"a range of activities, initiatives and approaches which are best conceptualised as a continuum. It includes responsive teaching and learning developments for up-skilling and developing people already in work as well as fostering capability and attributes to enhance the employability of students in higher education (HE)"**

    (Kettle,2013) (5)

Employer Engagement in Higher Education - ..Definitions

- "It is a way of working with people and a way of approaching teaching and learning and is not a separate and stand alone activity in its own right"

- "it is not about being employer driven, it is about educating people"

- a core aspect of the academic mission versus a function of career services

(Bolden et al,2010) (4)

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – Ladder

Level 1: Advising

Employers are consulted formally or informally

Level 2: Capacity Building

Educators or employers respond to each other's needs e.g. provision of services and resources

Level 3: Co-designing

Employers are active collaborators e.g. design of curricula and pathways

Level 4: Convening

Educators work to convene businesses to address workforce needs e.g. hubs

Level 5: Leading

Building partnerships that transform workforce systems and enhance growth   Randall Wilson (2015) *(1)*

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – Partnerships

A partnership:

- is a relationship created through an expressed or implied commitment between two or more parties who join together to achieve a common goal, combining their assets to accomplish the goal

- Works best when
  - The common goals are better achieved together than separately
  - An evident and tangible benefit to all partners
  - Effective fundraising tools in place
  - Good governance practices

Helene Aarons (2011) *(3)*

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – Strategic Partnerships..

- Continuous:cultivating long-term relationships
- Strategic:approaching employers in the context of plans
- Mutually valuable:solving problems and providing value
- Wide ranging:variety of employers
- Comprehensive:variety of issues and activities
- Intensive:substantative and in-depth
- Empowering:encourage employers to assume leadership
- Institutionally varied:engaging employers through a number of channels

(Randall Wilson, 2015) *(1)*

Employer Engagement in Higher Education – ..Strategic Partnerships

The case for strategic partnerships in Higher Education:

- Partnerships allow both sides to leverage their combined knowledge of labor markets, skills, pedagogy and students (Soares, 2010) *(1)*

- Neither employers nor educators can accomplish their goals in the labour market alone...To sustain long-term strategic partnerships with employers, ongoing , two way communication is critical in supporting active participation and building commitment and shared vision (Randall Wilson, 2015) *(1)*

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Higher Education in H&T..

- Traditionally closer to the industry due to a variety of reasons
  - Professional/Vocational education with extensive practical training (widely offered in colleges and polytechnics, university education as a more recent trend)
  - Sandwich courses, internship as an invaluable part of the educational programmes
  - Professionals from the industry in the role of Educators
  - Industry requirement and involvement

..Higher Education in H&T

- Collaboration versus partnership
  - Piecemeal approach; collaboration in specific areas, most frequent being practical training
  - Mostly erratic, not systematic
  - Short-term versus long-term
  - Low commitment
- Differences in values, needs, perceptions and expectations between collaborating parties

Considering the H&T Industry Characteristics

- Fast growing industry
- Service industry, people industry
- SMEs and family units
- Seasonality
- High-pace of operations
- Multi-national operations
- Amalgam of products and services
- Amalgam of knowledge and skills required at various levels
- Traditional versus new areas and forms of collaboration with HE

The challenge of developing an employer programme for H&T

- Holistic, systematic, strategic approach to partnership
- Research - Need to examine closely the capability for partnership
  - Needs, Motivators
  - Views, Perceptions and Expectations
  - Resources
  - Constraints
  - Critical Success Factors
- Need to learn from good practices
- European project requirements
- Need to consider the individualities of the hospitality and tourism industry

The Employer Programme for H & T as a System

- Fostering a strategic partnership
- Realistic: Functional and Flexible
- Rational: Processes, Methods and Criteria
- Qualitative: Meeting the needs of the partners
- Building on commitment and motivation
- Growing and self-developing
- Modern: use of modern methods and technology
- European: use and value
- Sustainable: meeting current and future needs;promoting sustainability principles

The Employer Programme for Hospitality and Tourism (EPHT)

Purpose

To develop an Employer Programme for the Hospitality and Tourism (HT) industry that will systematize and modernize cooperation between HT businesses and tertiary educational institutions offering programmes for this sector

EPHT Profile

- European project under Erasmus+, Key Action 2 for Higher Education: *Partnerships for Innovation and Good Practice Exchange*

- 1 of the 2 projects approved in the 2016 call for Higher Education

- Submitted as a 3 year project, approved for 2 years with a budget of approx. €240.000

- Started in Fall 2016, ends in Fall 2018

- 7 partners from 5 countries in different parts of Europe

EPHT Consortium

- Higher Hotel Institute Cyprus (Coordinator)
- Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), Finland
- TEI of Crete, Greece
- Cyprus Hotel Association (PASYXE)
- Documenta – Instituto europeo de estudios para la formacion y el desarollo, Spain
- Mediterranean Management Center (MMC)
- Gruppo 4, Italy

EPHT Target groups

- Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) (faculty, administration)

- Students

- Businesses in HT industry (owners, management, staff)

EPHT Key Benefits to Businesses

- ✓ Access to high-caliber students and graduates to meet temporary or permanent recruitment needs, internships and placements

- ✓ Contribution in shaping future workforce

- ✓ A range of facilities and services offered by educational institutions such as libraries, laboratories, research centers, consulting

- ✓ European networking and value

EPHT Key Benefits to HEIs

> **HEIs operating as OPEN SYSTEMS**

✓ Information on industry's needs and trends

✓ Access to industry resources

✓ Improvement of student learning and employability

✓ European networking and value

EPHT Key Benefits for STUDENTS

- ✓Direct contact with employers

- ✓Actively participate in activities, network effectively

- ✓Enhance their learning and employability

- ✓European networking and value

EPHT Intellectual Outpus

NEEDS ANALYSIS

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

OPERATIONAL MANUAL

PLATFORM

IO1: Needs analysis

- Scientific methodology, common to all countries, involving all partners
- Several methodological tools used: focus groups, semi-structured interviews and survey (electronically submitted questionnaire)
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis
- National reports from each HEI in the consortium
- Composition of the Common European Report

IO2: Best Practices Guide

- Scientific methodology, international research, involving all partners

- Consists of two parts:
  1. Best Practices in Europe and internationally for linking education and work in the hospitality and tourism sector
 2. Best Practices from the current project

IO3: Recommendation Report

- It involves the composition of a recommendations report
- It takes into consideration:
  1. The Needs Analysis report from the 1st intellectual output
  2. The identification of best practices across Europe and internationally from the 1st part of the 2nd intellectual output
- Recommendations on either to:
  1. Use existing practices
  2. Adapt existing practices
  3. Develop new innovative practices

IO4: Operational Manual

- Input from all prior work: Needs Analysis, Best Practices Guide and Recommendations Report

- Methodologically developed/evaluated

- Describes the system which links the employers with academia within the tourism and hospitality sector

- Provides detail on the processes and systems to be used to successfully activate the Employer Programme
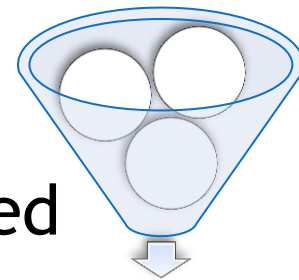
IO5: Platform

- It involves the design and development of the online platform for the implementation of the employer programme

- A platform that:
  - Supports the EPHT system electronically
  - Provides possibilities for education institutions, students, teachers and employers to interact and engage in collaboration and partnership through various activities
  - Links tertiary education to the employer market and improves the quality of education and its responsiveness to the needs of the labour market

Innovative Features of EPHT

- It is based on a CONCRETE NEEDS ANALYSIS of all different stakeholders in the HT sector
- It investigates available BEST PRACTICES and allows for the development of new innovative ones
- It provides a SYSTEMATIC APPROACH towards the development of a system for improving the cooperation and promote partnership between the hospitality & tourism industry and educational institutions
- The system is facilitated through the development of an ONLINE PLATFORM where diverse activities can be planned and implemented in a systematic way
- Innovative features of the PLATFORM
- It can be used by countries outside the consortium with the use of the OPERATIONAL MANUAL

References

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