

Final Report

TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF A TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPMENT

Tender Awarded by the Western Regional Tourism Partnership



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NORIBIC & NWRC

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Submitted to the Western Regional Tourism Partnership

March 2009

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Executive Summary

This report provides a synopsis of a ‘Tourism Industry Training Needs Assessment and Capacity Building Programme’, which was completed in March 2009. The Needs Assessment and Programme was commissioned by the Western Regional Tourism Partnership (WRTP) - a regional partnership comprising seven local authorities and four tourism delivery organizations in Counties Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh. The purpose of this assignment was, through independent study and collaboration review, to carry out an assessment of the training needs of the tourism providers and subsequently to develop tailored training and skills development solutions for the Tourism Providers in the targeted region. The North West Regional College (NWRC) and The Northern Ireland Business Innovation Centre (NORIBIC) carried out the Needs Assessment and the resultant Capacity Building Programme following their successful tender bid to deliver this programme.

In the delivery of this programme, NWRC and NORIBIC employed a combination of primary and secondary market research methodology including desk research, literature review, survey design and deployment and mail/email/telephone targeting. The companies chosen for the programme were sourced primarily from the mailing lists of the WRTP members and all the survey materials developed were done so in consultation and agreement with the WRTP Steering Committee. Indeed the active support from the WRTP Steering Committee in the delivery of this programme was a key ingredient in the programme’s success.

The literature review and secondary market research highlighted the Tourism sector’s significant contribution to the regional and national economy. It is a sector which receives attention and input from a range of statutory bodies and dedicated agencies. It is also a sector, which has had a reasonable degree of attention in terms of research on training needs, skills requirements and capacity building. This programme and resultant report serves as a very useful addition to the existing research and its regional perspective, particularly the opinion of tourism providers, equips those charged with the tourism element of the strategic development of the region (WRTP) with a document on which they can plan future activity.

The response rate to the primary market research survey was encouraging at an average of 15% across the region, which is above average for this type of survey and exceeds the response rate for similar studies across the whole of N. Ireland. Those providers who responded to the market research survey manage a wide variety of organisations of varying age. However, the majority of responses to the market research survey came mainly from organizations less than 10 years old and from tourism providers concentrating on accommodation – Hotels, B&Bs, Self Catering etc.

In terms of the most relevant themes for training, the tourism providers consistently highlighted the themes of Customer Care and Communication throughout the study, although Team Working, Technical skills and Management Skills also featured with reasonable prominence. There was very little sub-regional variation in this opinion.

The research clearly identified themes for training and the North West Regional College subsequently devised and delivered tailored training programmes in line with the priority themes. These may be summarised as follows:

- *Theme 1 – Exceeding Excellence when communicating with the customer.*
- *Theme 2 – Communication & Marketing*
- *Theme 3 – Building an effective Web Presence & E Marketing practice*

These three training sessions were offered to Tourism Providers across each of the three Counties of Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh. 166 participants registered to participate in these intensive one-day courses over a 3-4 week period and the feedback on each was overwhelmingly positive.

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by North West Regional College and Northern Ireland Business Innovation Centre following their successful tender bid to deliver a ‘Training Needs Assessment and Capacity Building Programme Development’ for the Western Region. The Tender was issued by the Western Regional Tourism Partnership as a core element of the organization’s Business and Tactical Action plan 2007-08.

The WRTP is a regional partnership comprising seven local authorities and four tourism delivery organisations that is responsible for the delivery of a regional tourism development strategy and plan for the three N.Ireland Counties of Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone.

The WRTP’s business and tactical action plan for the 2007 to 2008 period presents a programme of intervention to support, enable and mobilise product development and industry capability activities for the industry and Region. The plan comprises a series of five ‘Product Development’ programmes and three ‘Industry Capability’ projects. This study is a key research project under the Industry Capability category.

The purpose of this assignment was, through independent study and collaboration review, to carry out an assessment of the training needs of the tourism providers and subsequently to develop tailored training and skills development solutions including – teaching materials and training programmes/initiatives based on the identified needs and aspirations relating to the western Region and its operational environment.

This programme is intended to help inform and prioritise future development needs and intervention, and to ensure that the tourism product and the industry is well- placed to capitalise on opportunities that emerge, to maximise the sector’s potential as a sustainable, long-term economic generator in the Region.

The study reflects the growing recognition of the importance of tourism to the Western Region and the contribution that tourism makes to its economic and social prosperity.

- 1.2 To deliver this programme, NWRC and NORIBIC brought together a consortium with complementary skills and experience in programme and product audit, evaluation, review and market research: tourism training development, design and planning; and network facilitation co-ordination and development. In order to successfully secure the Tender, the partners demonstrated significant experience and expertise in the key areas required including: Industry assessment – capability, capacity, training needs etc; Development of tailored training packages for the Tourism sector; Development, co-ordination and facilitation of ‘Triple Helix’ interface Networks/Clusters.

2.0 Terms of Reference

2.1 Understanding of assignment

It is our understanding that this commission was intended to determine, through independent study and collaboration review of the tourism sector, the capability, training and skills development requirements of the Tourism sector within the Western Region. It was therefore hoped that this activity would help to develop and establish a formal and participative ‘network/forum’ of industry and education/training stakeholders (public, private and community sectors) to collaborate on efforts to address skills development and training issues for the Tourism sector in the WRTP region.

2.2 Study Aims

The purpose of this commission was to undertake an independent study of the training needs and capacity building requirements of the Western Tourism sector and tourism providers within the Region. The project has the following key aims:

- to review and re-interpret relevant existing tourism training and capacity building data and materials;
- to gather new and up-to-date quantitative and qualitative baseline data in relation to the existing competency levels of tourism providers;
- to examine and assess the training needs of the industry and identify a relevant capacity building programme for the industry;
- to identify training/capacity gaps within the sector and to identify opportunities to deliver a range of tailored skills development and training programmes; and
- To ensure representative participation on the programme of regional tourism product/service providers, suppliers and operators.

The assignment included research and intelligence gathering, but was intended primarily to be practical and ‘action’ focused. The geographical target area was Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh encompassing the seven impacted local authorities, while simultaneously having regard for the region’s position and role within the NI economy.

2.3 The Brief

- (1) Develop and establish a formal and participative ‘network/forum’ of industry and education/ training stakeholders to collaborate on efforts to address skills development and training issues;
- (2) To determine the capability, training and skills development needs of the Region through independent study and collaboration review of the training sector.
- (3) To develop tailored training and skills development solutions to include teaching materials and training programmes/initiatives based on the identified needs and aspirations of the providers, operators and suppliers.

- (4) To collaborate and partner with at least two specialist providers (e.g. education establishments, specialist training agencies/organisations and sector skills councils) to develop and deliver the required skills development and training programmes.
- (5) To develop at least three training initiatives, delivered in partnership or by commission on a County, sector or other identified theme basis, to include tailored 'on-site' implementation.
- (6) To ensure the participation of up to 90 candidates (approximately 30 per county/sector/initiative). This participation must include representative participation of tourism product/service providers, suppliers and operators

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Overview of approach

The project was delivered by senior staff from NWRC and NORIBIC (The Northern Ireland Business Innovation Centre). The delivery partners provided access to a team of highly experienced specialists who had the requisite skills to deliver all elements of the programme.

Our approach to delivery was to identify and agree the key required elements, in a structured and logical manner. Therefore our approach can be summarized as follows:

- Project Initiation and key deliverables agreed with WRTP
- Carry out Independent Study of Training Needs and Capacity Building requirements and prepare draft report to be agreed in principle by WRTP.
- Engage with additional ‘specialist provider(s)’ to suggest the development and delivery of the required skills and training programmes including teaching materials, based on the identified needs and aspirations of the providers, operators and suppliers.
- Convene a stakeholders’ network meeting to discuss findings of study, suggested generic training programmes/initiatives.
- Hold regular review feedback meetings with WRTP.

3.2 Approach in Detail

Undertake Independent Study of Training Needs and Capacity Building requirements of Western Tourism Sector and prepare a detailed and concise evaluation report identifying training/capacity requirements.

Evidently relevant data (both existing and secured during the study) was required to prepare the report. In order to accumulate and interpret this information, a number of tried and tested methodologies were applied. The approach was a combination of primary and secondary market research techniques and may be summarized as follows:

- A series of semi-structured interviews were undertaken encompassing the following:
 - Face-to-Face Focused interviews with the agreed nominees from the WRTP Steering Committee which will include representatives from the 7 identified local authorities and the 5 existing tourism delivery agencies operating within the defined region.
 - Email, postal and telephone surveys targeting relevant personnel from tourism operators, suppliers and providers as identified and agreed with the WRTP.

- A representative sample of the stakeholders was targeted in undertaking this study and care was taken to ensure sufficient representation from this sample grouping (i.e. in terms of the location of participants, background/roles of stakeholders etc).
- A questionnaire designed to assess individual opinion on all aspects of the training needs assessment and capacity building programme development was developed and agreed with the WRTP Steering Committee. This questionnaire also sought to assess the potential for network/collaborative development at this stage. The questionnaire was supplemented by telephone calls.
- We sought and received a mailing list from each of the WRTP regions and drafted a form letter, signed by a nominated tourism representative in each sub-region, to target all the tourism providers identified in the WRTP region. In order to secure feedback from the agreed 15-20% sample of tourism product providers, operators and suppliers, we employed various methodologies including mail/e-mail and follow-up call to gauge opinion. This targeting will also allow recruitment to the three training programmes/initiatives which will be run throughout the region.
- An assessment of existing information including market reports surveys etc was undertaken to determine any previous statistics findings and recommendations. Reports have already been produced in recent years by organizations including NITB, ILEX, PWC, People 1st in an attempt to identify the needs of the tourism industry in relation to training and development. We also requested that each of the WRTP representatives submit any recent regional tourism related reports and info, of which they were aware. The key findings of these reports was quoted throughout this report and used to stimulate response during the primary research surveys.
- Based on these activities, we produced this concise evaluation report identifying training capacity requirements.

Collaborate & Partner with minimum 2 specialist providers

The North West Regional College is already a specialist provider in this field with extensive experience in the delivery of accredited and registered training programmes. The North West Regional College held a number of meetings with hospitality educators and Information

Technology trainers within South West Regional College and through external business linkages and across-college schools. This collaboration, within the time constraints set worked effectively as materials were written and produced to meet the identified training needs based upon the primary research and needs analysis that had been executed with industry.

Develop Tailored Training and skills development solutions

The training needs analysis identified a number of key areas which industry felt needed attention. The priority areas for training within the time constraints in place were discussed with the WRTP and commonality from all regions identified that Customer Care, Marketing, Communications, information technology, management skills and teamwork needed addressing through the training provision. Based upon the research and discussions with the WRTP members a proposed training plan was disseminated with an outline of content. This proposal was amended following input from all parties involved and it was agreed that a blend of the identified training needs would be facilitated within three training themes. These themes would be delivered across the WRTP region by key experts in the identified discipline areas. The themes would be delivered as one day workshops in order to facilitate the timeframes, the geographic spread for delivery and to suit industry needs. The training sessions took place within the local College, community facilities and hotels. A wide range of industry providers participated in the training across all themes and regions and these providers were able to gain knowledge, a practical insight and a realisation of how to implement different techniques for the benefit of their businesses. The themes all included practical elements to allow hands-on application of the theory being delivered. The content for the Customer Care programme included:

- Principles of Excellent Customer Service, Strategies, Identifying customer types / characteristics / needs, Matching your product / service with customer requirements, Retaining Customer Loyalty, Monitoring & evaluating feedback.

Content for the Marketing & Communication programme included:

- Personal Communication & Mediums, Defining Marketing, Segmentation, Profiling your markets, Producing a SWOT, Marketing Planning, Benefits of e-marketing, Developing a strategy, Technologies, Monitoring campaigns, Legal Considerations.

Content for the Information Technology programme which integrated aspects for marketing included:

Website

- Site design & navigation, Meta tags, Cross-linking strategy, Search engine optimisation

Email

- Email campaigns (subscriptions), Mail format, Customer Relations Management (Building Relationships)

Develop at least 3 training initiatives

The training needs that were identified through the research were developed along a number of common themes. This was based on the needs of the individual respondents to the primary research. It was agreed that the training would be transferable across all industry sectors and within different regional initiatives that might be developed. The themes agreed were:

- 3.1 Exceeding Excellence When Communicating With The Customer
- 3.2 Communication & Marketing
- 3.3 Building an Effective Web Presence & E-Marketing Practice

In addition, important skills such as management and teamwork were integrated into the individual theme content for delivery. The underlying objective of the training themes was to empower individual industry providers to identify areas within their own businesses that could be enhanced and developed through the knowledge and practical skills that were delivered.

4.0 Secondary Research

4.1 Tourism Industry Overview

‘Tourism is one of the most important growth sectors in the European economy, with 7 million jobs in the core industry and 20 million jobs in the related economy. Until 2000 annual growth of employment in tourism was 3 %. It is estimated that there is a potential for up to three million additional jobs. Europe remains a primary destination.

At the same time, tourism has one of the highest labour mobility rates across Europe, allowing consideration of the European nature of the sector, at least in this respect.

Thus, the discussion about new occupations and future skill needs for the sector in Europe has particular significance.

New offers and services are emerging in tourism which need adequately qualified staff.’ (QTEL.NET - *summarized comparative study & analysis on the success factors for matching between qualification demands and training provision in the sector of tourism.*)

A research paper produced by the **N. Ireland Assembly research and library service in June 2008** examined ‘*Employment in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Northern Ireland*’ cited key facts, comments and figures regarding the NI Tourism sector from a number of different organizations who have regular contact with the tourism providers in the NI economy.

(The *People 1st* contribution included some very interesting overall facts on the sector)

- 42,980 hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism employees in Northern Ireland.
- Hospitality industries dominate the sector
- The sector's qualification's profile is low (no qualifications (29%), Level one (21%), Level two (23%), Level three (16%), Level four (10%).
- 46% of the workforces in Northern Ireland work in elementary occupations, such as kitchen assistants, waiting staff and bar staff.
- A skills shortage across specific occupational areas is high-particularly for Managers and Chefs.
- The sector is also suffering from a high number of hard to fill vacancies.
- Indifferent human resource practices.
- Low appeal of sector— not perceived as a career of choice.
- Lack of customer awareness – customer feedback is limited
- Low take up and achievement rate of Modern Apprenticeship Programmes
- Training undertaken by businesses in the main is focused on meeting statutory requirements such as health & safety & food hygiene.

The *NI Hoteliers Federation* saw the necessity for the government and tourism agencies to deliver appropriate training to international standards and recognize and support events and attractions as part of their tourism drive.

The *N Ireland Tourist Industry Confederation* criticized the ‘unnecessary complex and over bureaucratic’ tourist industry structures with too many organizations and a lack of clarity in their roles causing confusion. They wished to see ‘improved quality of information to allow the industry to respond to the needs of tourists. Much of the current data is not received quickly enough and does not adequately recognise the overall contribution of tourism.’

In that 2008 research paper, the *Tourism Training Trust* also lamented the following:

- too low overall level of work relevant qualifications
- low uptake and success rates of Modern Apprenticeships, especially in the key occupation of chef;
- persistent hard-to-fill vacancies, experienced by around 17% of businesses;
- significant skill shortages, especially in key occupations such as chefs;

In Jul 07 **FGS McClure Watters** produced a *HRD and Re-skilling Exit strategy for the Blackwater Regional Partnership* (a development organization covering the council areas of Dungannon, South Tyrone, Armagh and Monaghan) in which they confirmed that skills shortages and negative industry perceptions were not confined to merely the N. Ireland market place.

‘Recent studies indicate that the growing tourism sector is not adequately equipped to meet the growing needs and demands of domestic and international tourists and visitors. A study carried out by the Irish Cross Border organisation on the indigenous tourism sector indicated the following;

- In the Tourism sector, companies in the Republic of Ireland were more likely to have maintained, rather than increased or decreased, staffing levels at 73%, than in Northern Ireland at 41.5%. .
- In both the Tourism and I.T. sectors, no respondent companies felt that they had too many staff....The results show that Tourism is the sector in which most employers currently have inadequate levels of staff.
- Employers reported a stigma attached to the Tourism industry and stated that the failure to attract suitably qualified staff is due, in part, to the poor image of this sector, in this region e.g. long hours of work make it unattractive.’

The DCC - TOURISM DEVELOPMENT DRAFT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2009-2012 also quoted statistics which demonstrate the significance of the Tourism sector at both local and national level and in comparison to other international regions and countries, there is still a significant opportunity to grow the tourism contribution to levels experienced in other regional economies. ‘The Quarterly Employment Survey results for December 2005 reported that there were 51,390 jobs in tourism and leisure in Northern Ireland (i.e. 41,980 in hotels and restaurants, 9,410 in other tourism and tourism-related occupations). This represented 7.3% of total employee jobs.

The NI Census of Employment for 2005 indicated 2,911 jobs in the Derry hotel and restaurant sector out of a total City employment of 40,480, or 7.1%. To obtain the total volume of direct tourism sector employment (i.e. to take account of jobs in tourism but outside the hotels and restaurant sub-sector), a factor of around 1.2 needs to be applied to the figures for hotel and restaurant employment, suggesting that total direct employment in the sector in Derry five years ago was somewhat in excess of 3,000. This level is likely to have risen slightly in the period since 2005 but the real potential remains in the future when the tourism sector could absorb around 10% or more of the labour force of the City and surrounding area.’

Skills and Training

The concerns about lack of skills and the necessity for training within the Tourism sector are not new concerns to the sector and are certainly not limited to the N. Ireland market as is evidenced from the QTEL.NET report above.

In their 2006 synopsis on '*The Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism Sector in Northern Ireland*', **People 1st** reported that the Northern Ireland Skills Task Force commissioned a report into the Skills and Training Needs in the Northern Ireland Tourism and Hospitality Industry in 2002. This report identifies a number of problems that need to be addressed by the sector including:

- The adoption of best practice HRM to support "higher-value" business strategies.
- The adoption of business strategies which offer them the possibility of repositioning their businesses to achieve enhanced profitability and which will help to attract, retain and develop staff.
- The need for the Department for Employment and Learning to review its strategies and priorities to actively promote the value of HRM in the sector, and to ensure that its strategies and interventions, are targeted at assisting the industry to make this strategic move.

Two of the key findings within the Mar 06 People 1st report were as follows:

- 29 percent of the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism workforce in Northern Ireland do not have any qualifications.
- 17 percent of 'hotel and restaurant' establishments have skills shortage vacancies

In November 2006, **People 1st** produced a more comprehensive report on skills or lack thereof in the Tourism sector. The *Sector Skills Agreement Northern Ireland* document suggests that 'the Skills Strategy primarily aims to tackle four key areas that have emerged strongly from the research with employers and are felt to be pivotal in addressing the wider skill needs of the sector. The four areas are:

- Management and Leadership
- Customer Service
- Chefs
- Retention

People 1st gave an overview of Skills Needs and cited the main skills lacking and associated percentages as follows:

63% Customer Handling
56% Communication
52% Team Working
47% Technical and practical related to role
44% Problem solving
29% Management Skills

Furthermore the report summarized key areas that required focus:

Management Skills

- Quick promotion has led to a lack of management skills
- People management is essential
- Small business management skills are essential

Customer Service Skills

- Closely related to communication skills

- Significantly impacted by the attitude of staff

Technical skills

- Food preparation and cooking
- Travel industry knowledge

In terms of access to training through the FE sector, People 1st assert that food safety and preparation dominate provision although there is a concern about both the consistency of delivery and the low uptake on food and drink service courses and identifying and recruiting suitable students for these sectoral programmes.

As regards on the job or work-based training, the following facts have been quoted:

- A high percentage of units are providing an induction (77%) and initial training, but ongoing development is informal;
- Customer service and supervisory training are the most likely training to be delivered;
- 66% of employers are providing training (most likely to improve efficiency and customer service)
- 14% of employers are using colleges and they are rated very highly.

Although training does take place both through FE colleges and on the job, there are still areas in which the tourism industry believes education is not providing a satisfactory service. People 1st quoted the following:

- “Customer service” trained staff
- Basic business skills e.g. stocktaking, food costing, menu planning
- Enough practical experience
- Knowledge of industry changes
- Skilled chefs

It will come as no surprise therefore that ‘Upskilling the workforce’ is a priority for the Tourism Industry and three areas in particular have come into focus: Chefs; Customer Service standards; Attracting better calibre candidates.

Chefs

- Over the past decade the NVQ in food preparation and cooking has provided the main route through further education, but employers are concerned about its consistency with different colleges covering different areas. Consequently, many employers are concerned that new entrants are lacking the basic skills and knowledge.

Customer Service Standards

- 64 percent of employers believe new entrants lack the required skills and more critically 63 percent believe their current staff lack the necessary customer service skills to meet their business needs.
- Current training is not effectively tackling the lack of skills within the current workforce and importantly the lack of a suitable qualification that employers recognise plays an important role.
- The sector needs a suite of customer service qualifications at levels 2 and 3 that provide the required customer service skills.

Attracting Better Calibre Candidates

- There is a need for a structured development opportunity and a code of practice that develops the skills required for managers, provides a taster of the management opportunities available and which at the same time is fun.
- Introduction of an inspirational “gold standard” Apprenticeship Programme to increase the number of apprentices signing up and improving the quality of apprenticeship programme for all parties.

In order to meet these requirements the People 1st skills strategy set a no of targets:

- By September 2009, all new chefs leaving further education will have completed the new Professional Chef Diploma at either levels 1, 2 or 3
- By September 2008, establish the Approved Kitchen Practitioner programme for all food handlers
- By January 2008, put in place a suite of customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 that meet the needs of the sector.
- Review of HE provision against world class management colleges by September 2008
- By September 2008, have in place a suite of short courses developed to meet the industry needs

4.2 Local Tourism Agencies and Local Authorities

The frequent references to tourism in the strategic plans of the Local Authorities and the existence of dedicated tourism agencies across the WRTP region both serve to demonstrate the importance of the Tourism sector to the region. A sample of these references is highlighted below, in particular those with relevance to Training and Skills Development.

4.2.1 Derry

‘Existence of key scenic, cultural and historic assets provides strong tourism potential for Derry, but significant improvements in tourism product and marketing are needed’.
(DCC SWOT analysis)

‘Tourism is still a young dawn industry of the modern economy that is effective in generating income flows that are more impactful than exports, creating a wide range of employment, leveraging opportunities for small business development as well as supporting many elements of the local economy such as food and beverage production, retailing, local transport and personal services.

Recommendation 3 – The Vision for Tourism

Tourism will be a lead sector in the economic and social development of modern Derry, responding competitively in leveraging its historic and cultural strengths while investing creatively in new infrastructures, **enhanced human resources** and enabling institutional capability to create unique experiences that will motivate travelers and expand its markets and potentials.’

(DCC - TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR 2009-2012)

‘Vision

A well-managed environment both urban and rural will be coupled with a variety of new and refreshed products, **delivered by enthusiastic and well-trained staff** and giving good value for money.

Key aspects of a sustainable tourism policy include and **investment in human resources.**'
(DERRY CITY COUNCIL - TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2002-2006)

'Recommended Key Economic Development Priorities for Derry

1. Facilitate rapid growth in tourism sector and increase share of higher value tourism.

The key to successful special interest tourism products is professional integrated supply and delivery and we would strongly recommend that the relevant agencies should work with the tourism sector to develop and market these products.'

(DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR DERRY CITY COUNCIL AREA - ILEX)

'Growing markets include tourism,'

(LABOUR MARKET STUDY FOR THE LOCAL STRATEGY PARTNERSHIP DERRY CITY COUNCIL AREA)

Various local authorities and tourism development agencies in the County Derry area have delivered programmes to support the Tourism sector over the past 2-3 years and a sample of these is also outlined below:

'The Business & Cultural Animation Skills Development Programme Sept 07-Apr 08 (BCAP) was developed in two strands to cover training for management and supervisory level and also to develop the skills of those staff dealing with customers and tourists' -
(DVCB)

Of course, DVCB were not the only local Tourism provider which has offered courses to help companies interacting with tourists in the region. A sample of those courses offered by Sperrins Tourism Ltd is included below.

- Natural Heritage Day – 19th May 2006
- Sense of Sperrins Training Event – 1 – 2 June 2006
- Health & Safety – 7th June 2006
- Welcome All – Wednesday 13 June 2006
- First Aid – 14th June 2006
- First Aid – Monday 4th September 2006
- Welcome Host – Wednesday 6th September 2006
- Welcome All – 13th September 2006
- Welcome Europe – Wednesday 20th September 2006
- First Aid – Monday 25th September 2006
- Welcome Host – Wednesday 27th September 2006
- Cook with Norah- 29th September 2006
- Introduction to Organic Gardening

- Genealogy Day
- ICT Training – Wednesday 13th August 2008

(TRAINING COURSES DELIVERED BY – SPERRINS TOURISM LTD)

And the following four workshops for event organisers were held within the district of Magherafelt. Events are a particular focus for tourism in the Magherafelt District.

- Workshop 1 - How to complete a funding application form
- Workshop 2 - Reducing your grant dependency
- Workshop 3 – Events PR & Marketing
- Workshop 4 – Event Management

These workshops were designed to address the key skills required when organising an event or festival.

(MAGHERAFELT DISTRICT COUNCIL)

4.2.2 Tyrone

As regards the Tyrone based Local Authorities and Tourism Agencies, the following tourism related information was identified from local/regional reports and strategies:

‘Indicative Actions: Promote Tourism – Ensure employees in tourism are trained to deliver a quality tourist product.’

(COOKSTOWN - LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN (2007 - 2010))

‘Specified training needs as follows:

- Customer service
- Marketing
- Use of New Media (use of podcasts, Interactive maps, blogs, web sites etc)

Other areas identified in the report include –

- Need for partnership and collaborative working between providers
- Need to learn from best practice
- Need mentoring combined with training
- Need to improve sales and marketing to ROI market –implied need for training in PR / Marketing / image development’

(FLAVOUR OF TYRONE MAY 2007)

- ‘Use of new technology – adapt new technology for marketing
- Visitor package development
- Welcome Host

- Marketing
- H&S/ First aid/ Child protection
- Learn from Best practice
- Blue badge guide training'

(STRABANE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT JULY 08 - TRAINING ACTIVITIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED)

4.2.3 Fermanagh

‘Qualitative research undertaken for FLT has also shown very low levels of market awareness of the Fermanagh tourism product... A fresh new approach to the promotion of Fermanagh as a quality tourism destination will address this lack of awareness and reservation by presenting new images of Fermanagh’

‘Facility operators in the county need to be supported and encouraged to reinvigorate their product offering...’

‘The traditional activities of cruising and angling require new approaches to positioning and promotion in the market in addition to investment in facilities and support services’

‘Confused responsibility for tourism development in Fermanagh – no one organization can take an overview of what Fermanagh needs and deliver a strategic approach’

(Destination Fermanagh – The vision for tourism 2006-2016)

4.2.4 General

The NITB - CORPORATE PLAN 2008 – 2011 also emphasizes the importance of training for the tourism providers. They cite a ‘**Critical success Factor**’ as the need to advance ‘Customer service/skills development’ and one of their key **Strategy Driver(s) is the** ‘Investment in skills development and quality assurance schemes to ensure the consistently highest standards of service and customer experience.’

According to the NITB corporate plan, ‘people (working in the tourism industry) must have the right ability and motivation. Tourism must be positioned as a premier career and supported with skills and development programmes that promote opportunity and commitment. NITB have committed to working with their key partners in the delivery of skills development amongst other factors. They have committed to deliver innovative training and development.’

5.0 Primary Research

The secondary research carried out as part of this Tourism Industry Training Needs Analysis (summarized above), combined with a series of interviews with the tourism industry professionals of the WRTP and grounded in the industry experience of the NWRC all served to highlight the key focus areas for the primary research element of this study.

These key focus areas, which are further sub-divided in the survey methodology to maximize the contribution by tourist industry providers, can be summarized as follows:

- Industry opinion on Training Requirements
- Industry opinion on Skills Shortages
- Industry opinion on Training Institutions
- Industry opinion on Tourism representative organisations and programmes
- Industry opinion on Existing Vacancies
- General Industrial Opinion.

All of the above were agreed in the shape of a questionnaire with the WRTP Steering Committee in advance of the Training Needs analysis being carried out.

5.1 Response Rate

For purposes of assessment, it was agreed that the responses across the WRTP region would be split across the 3 Counties of Derry, Tyrone and Fermanagh in addition of course to an assessment of the region as a whole.

The mailing lists of all WRTP agencies were made available to carry out the needs analysis and a response rate of approximately 14% was received to the survey following emails, mails and phone calls to companies across the entire region. This is an above average response rate for the methodology employed and also exceeds, in total actual number of replies, similar tourism surveys carried out for the entire N. Ireland marketplace.

The approximate breakdown in terms of response across each of the Counties is very similar as can be seen below:

- Derry – 15%
- Tyrone – 13.5%
- Fermanagh – 16%

NWRC/NORIBIC would like to thank the WRTP Steering Committee for their assistance in getting the surveys out to their member companies and indeed for the subsequent encouragement towards the completion of the study. This approach served both to increase the response rate and to enhance the validity of the study and as such should prove a valuable resource to the WRTP for purposes of future planning.

5.2 Company type, size and age

Those companies, which responded to the Training needs analysis were, just like all the companies targeted throughout the study, many and varied. Accommodation providers including Hotels, B&Bs and Self Catering were the strongest representative group accounting for over 40% of overall responses. In terms of split by county, Tour guides were well represented in Derry City whereas festivals and community groups were strongly represented in Co Derry. Activity based Tourism providers are strongly represented in Co Fermanagh while

the response from Co Tyrone providers was reasonably well represented by Food/Catering establishments.

Across all 3 counties, those who responded to the survey currently employ a combined total of over 900 people and the majority of these companies were established within the last ten years.

5.3 Industry opinion on Training Requirements

5.3.1 Level of Qualifications

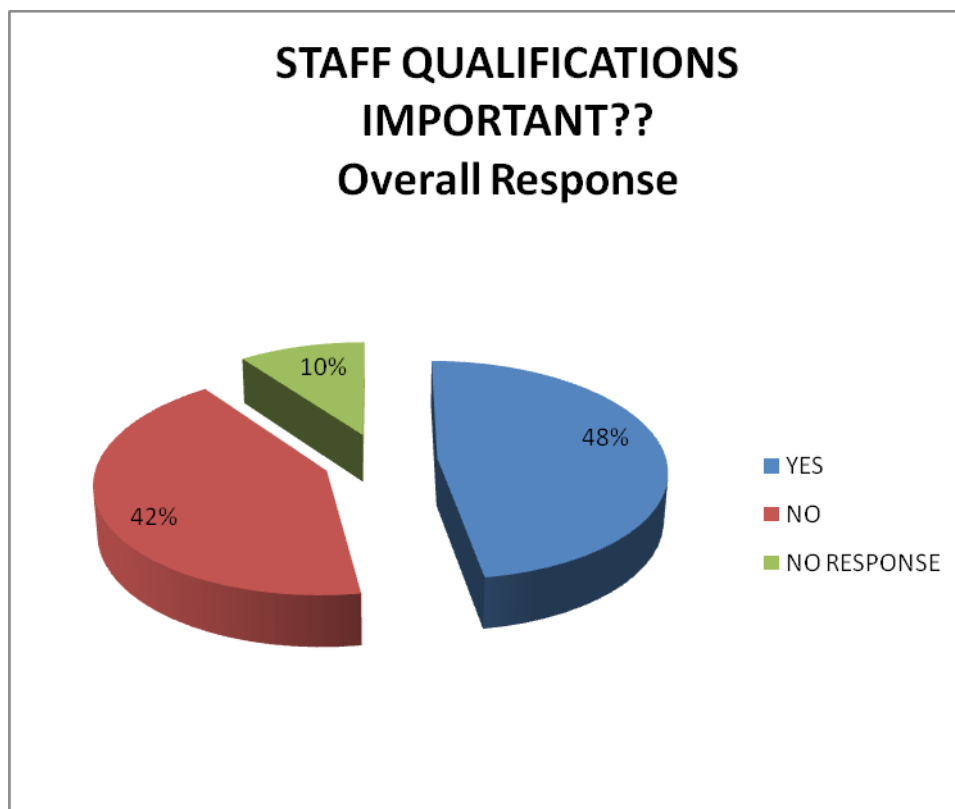
Our secondary research has identified that “29 percent of the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism workforce in Northern Ireland do not have any qualifications” (People 1st).

While those companies which replied to this study had a large number of employees with no qualifications, employees with qualification levels 2 & 3 (i.e. those with GCSE/1st Diploma and those with A Levels/National Diplomas) were the strongest represented across all three counties without exception.

5.3.2 Importance of Qualifications – are qualifications essential to running your business?

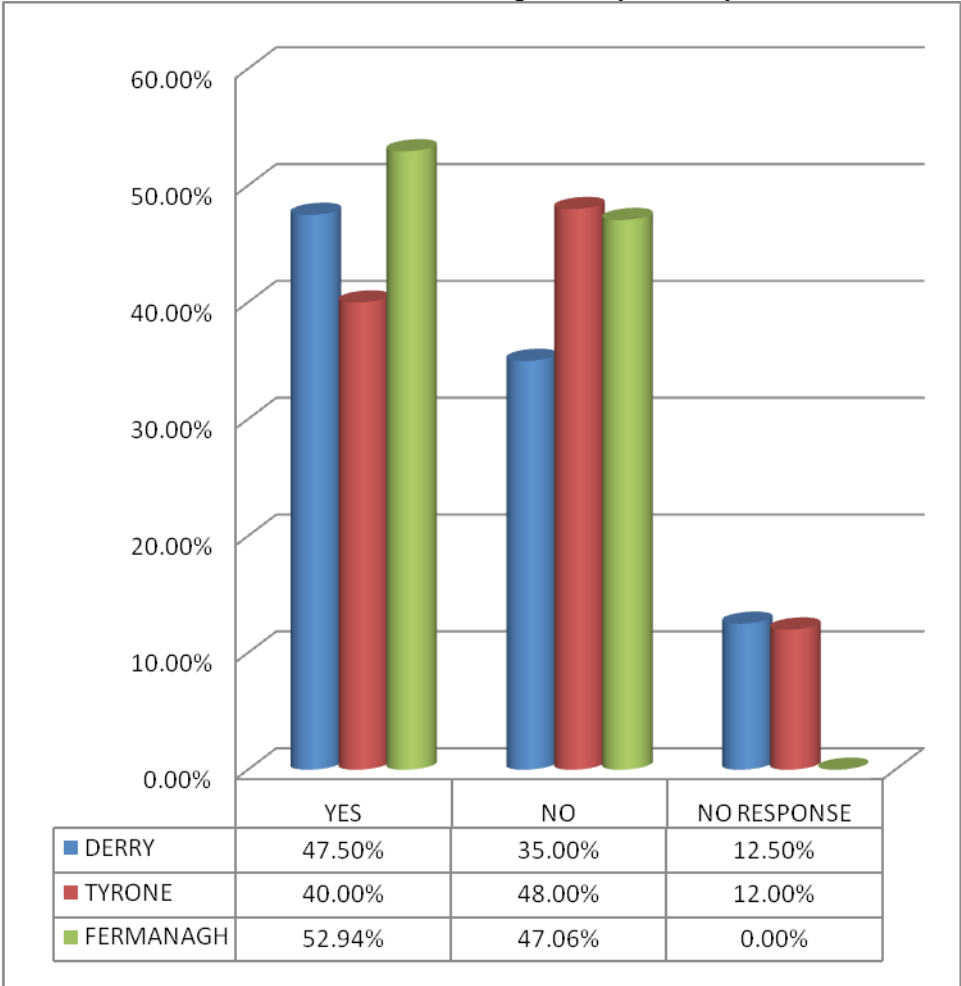
In order to determine, if qualifications really mattered to the tourism providers in the WRTP region, all were asked if staff qualifications were essential in running their business.

Interestingly, while the greatest overall response was positive at almost 50%, over 4 in 10 suggested that perhaps staff qualifications were not vital to the success of their business.



When these figures are further analysed across the three counties separately as below, the pictured painted is still one with a large number of respondees indicating that staff qualifications is not necessarily always the key ingredient. In fact, this is most noticeably the case with the company respondees in Tyrone, where a larger percentage gave a negative rather than a positive response to this question.

**Are staff qualifications essential in the running of your company?
Response by County**



5.4 Most Relevant Training Themes?

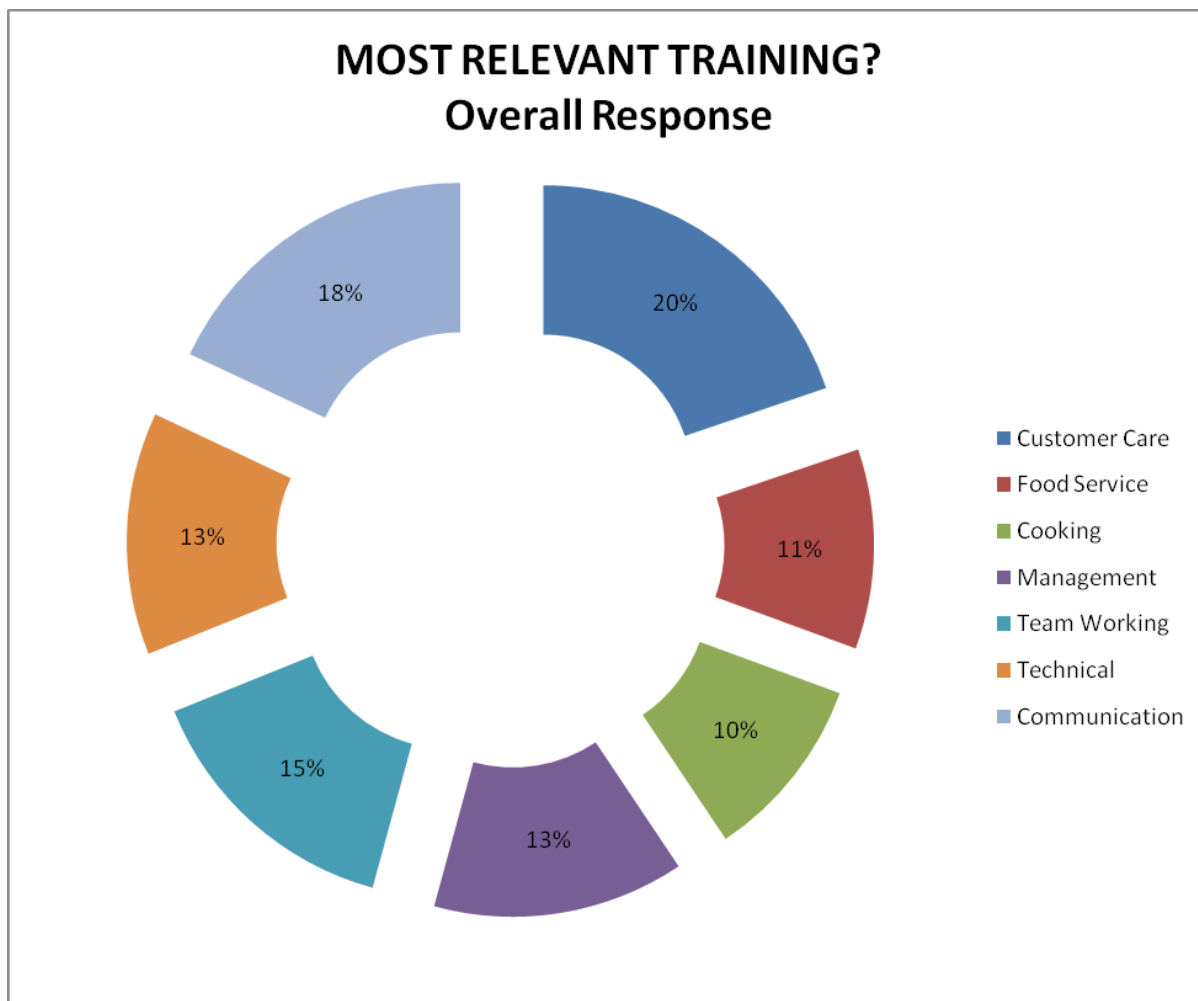
Our secondary research has identified some targets (*People 1st*) that have been set previously for the sector:

- *“By September 2009, all new chefs leaving further education will have completed the new Professional Chef Diploma at either levels 1, 2 or 3*
- *By September 2008, establish the Approved Kitchen Practitioner programme for all food handlers*
- *By January 2008, put in place a suite of customer service qualifications at level 2 and 3 that meet the needs of the sector.*
- *Review of HE provision against world class management colleges by September 2008*
- *By September 2008, have in place a suite of short courses developed to meet the industry needs”*

Given that this is a training needs analysis, it was important during the course of this study to get an early yardstick as to the most relevant training themes for the companies who responded to the study and given that this was the key objective of the study, these themes appeared several times throughout the questionnaire in order to be emphatic on the determination of training needs. The generic themes identified were taken from those most often cited throughout the secondary research.

It was evident from early in the study that the themes of Customer Care and Communication, accounting for approximately 1/5 each of the overall response, were going to be central themes for development during the course of the study and subsequent training programmes.

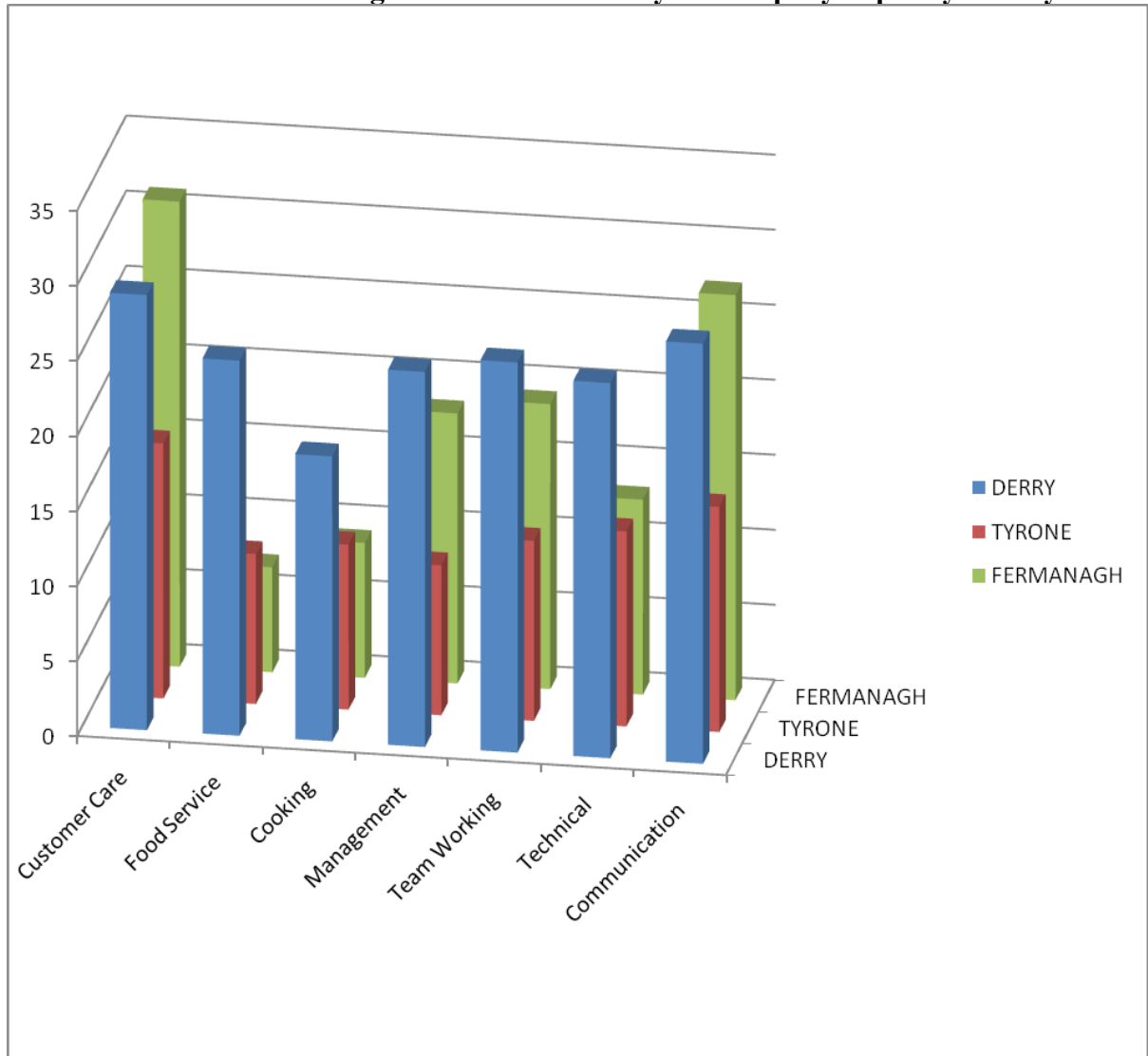
The themes of Team Working skills, Technical skills and Management skills made up the next group of identified training requirements with each accounting for almost 15% of responses. The last groupings were the catering related Food service and Cooking skills. At 10% each, these were the lowest ranking in terms of relevant training cited by the companies. However it should be noted that the latter two themes are only of relevance to providers offering catering facilities whereas the former groupings would of course be relevant to all providers.



Within the questionnaire used to extract the information from the Tourism providers for this Training Needs analysis, the companies were asked to rank each of the themes in order of importance (1= Very Important; 5= Not Important). For the purposes of analysis, the figures represented in the diagrams above and below in this section account for the respondents who placed a 1 or 2 importance ranking against any of the themes identified.

The split across the counties in terms of the most relevant training themes is broadly reflective of the region as a whole and the groupings identified above. It is perhaps noteworthy however that the differential between the primary grouping (of Customer Care and Communication) and the other two groupings (Team Working skills/Technical skills/ Management and Food Prep/Cooking) is greatest in Fermanagh.

Which of the following are most relevant to your company? Split by County



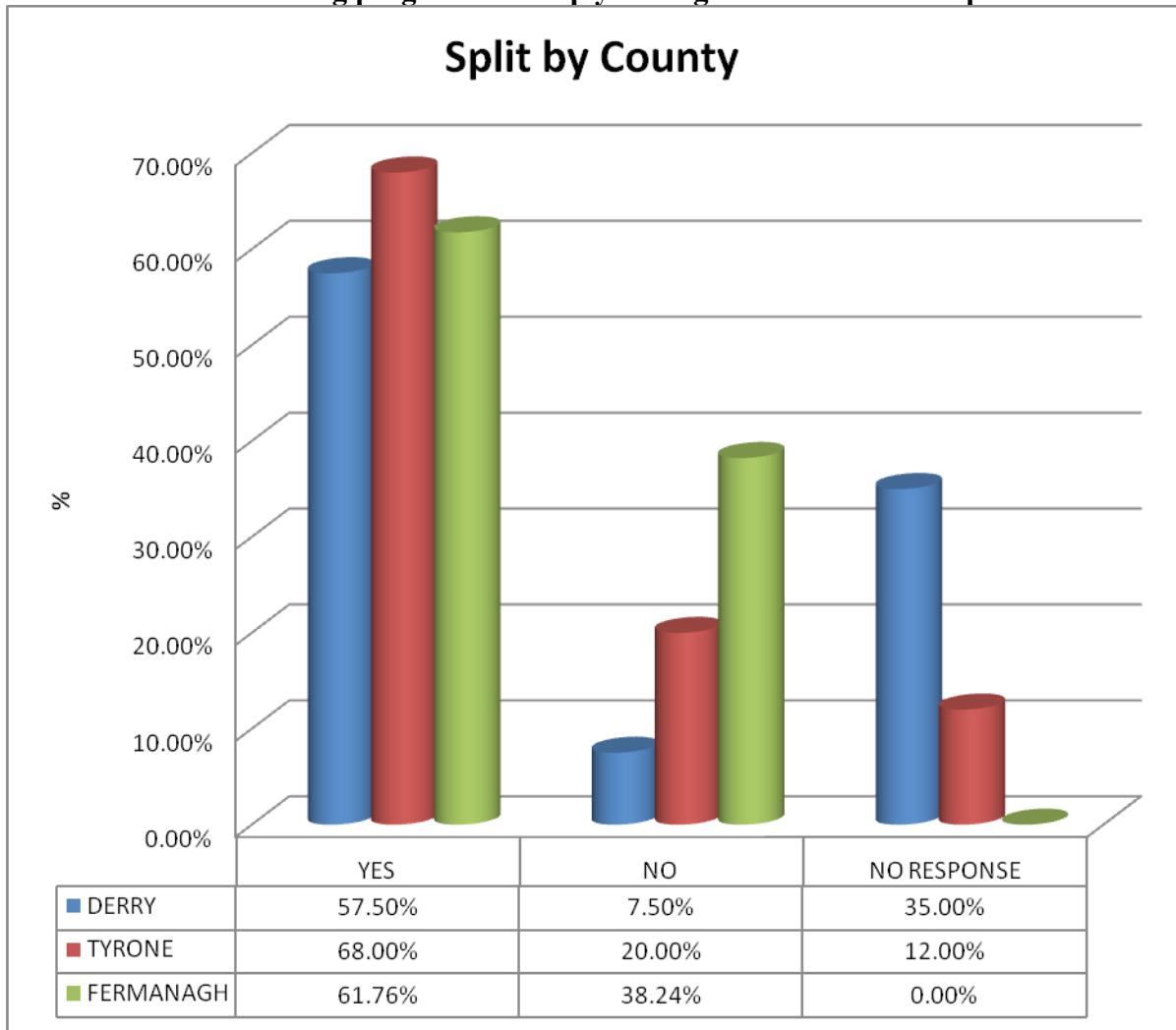
5.5 Do training programmes help your organisations to develop?

Keeping with the approach to determine the relevance of training to the Tourism Providers, each were asked a simple question if training programmes on offer helped their organizations to develop. Overall 60% of company respondents indicated that training programmes do contribute to the development of their companies and only 1 in 5 responding companies offered a negative response to this question.



A more indepth analysis of the same question across the three Counties indicates an approximate 60/40 split in Fermanagh and a 70/30 split in Tyrone to the question of Training programmes helping companies to develop. A sizeable number of 35% of the respondees in Derry offered no response to this question.

Do training programmes help your organisations to develop?



5.6 Is training offered by your company?

Previous research has indicated that 66% of employers are providing work based training for their staff.

During the course of this study it emerged that approximately 46% of tourism providers offered some form of staff training in-house and there was virtually no difference in this percentage figure across the individual counties. Most of the companies who did offer a response to this question indicated that training was usually provided on a Quarterly or an Annual basis.

The training on offer tends to be concentrated on Customer Service and on Improved Efficiency and is usually taken care of through internal provision, quite often by owner/managers and by supervisors.

5.6.1 Emerging Training themes

Based on information that was contained in the secondary research, all companies were asked if they had identified any new and emerging themes/areas developing for training requirements? The choices presented were as follows:

- New technologies;
- New services;
- Social interaction abilities,
- Personal business skills,
- Communication awareness,
- Other (please specify)

Of all of these emerging themes, New Technologies and Communication Awareness featured highest across all three counties while the theme of Social Interaction Ability recorded the fewest responses in each county. However, it should also be noted that at least 25% of tourism providers offered no response to the above question.

5.7 Industry opinion on Skills Shortages

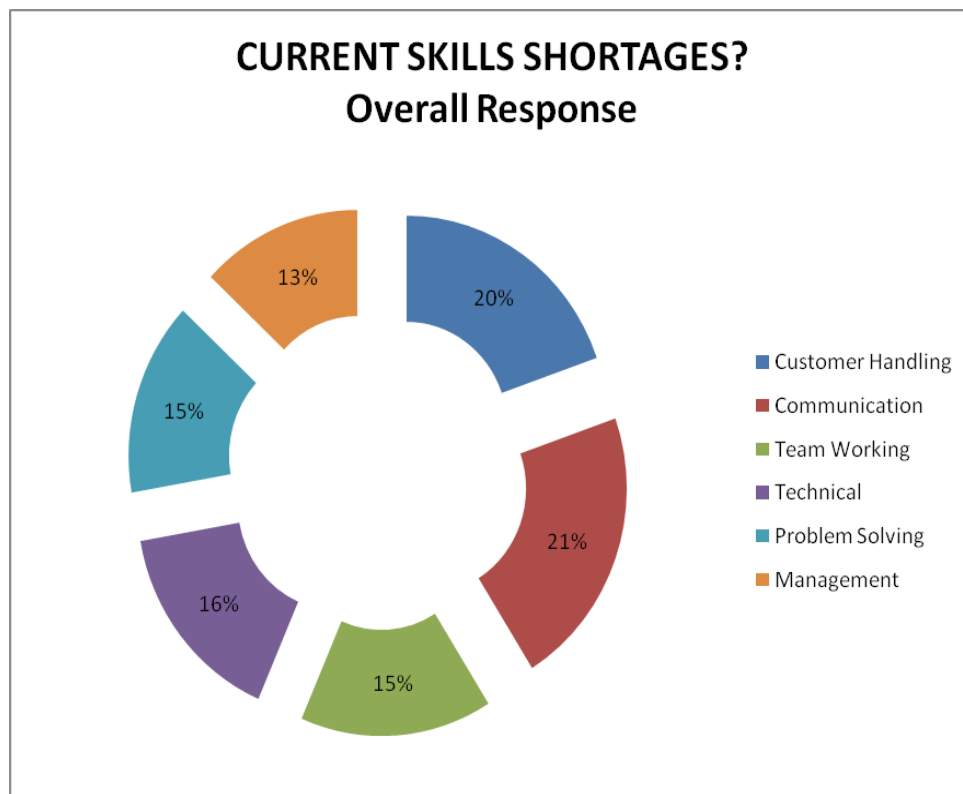
Various facts and figures have been reported in terms of skills shortages in the Tourism sector: “17 percent of ‘hotel and restaurant’ establishments have skills shortages” and “12% of establishments in Northern Ireland reported skills gaps in their current workforce”. (*People 1st*). Our secondary research also highlighted four key areas that are considered by employers to be pivotal in addressing the wider skill needs of the sector. The four areas are:

- “Management and Leadership; Customer Service; Chefs; Staff Retention”

More specifically, the following areas were cited in a 2006 (*People 1st*) study as being the main skills lacking in the sector and the percentage of employers highlighting each are also given below:

- 63% Customer Handling (communication and attitude)
- 56% Communication
- 52% Team Working
- 47% Technical and practical related to role
- 44% Problem solving
- 29% Management Skills (Too quick promotion; people mgt lacking; better small bus skills)

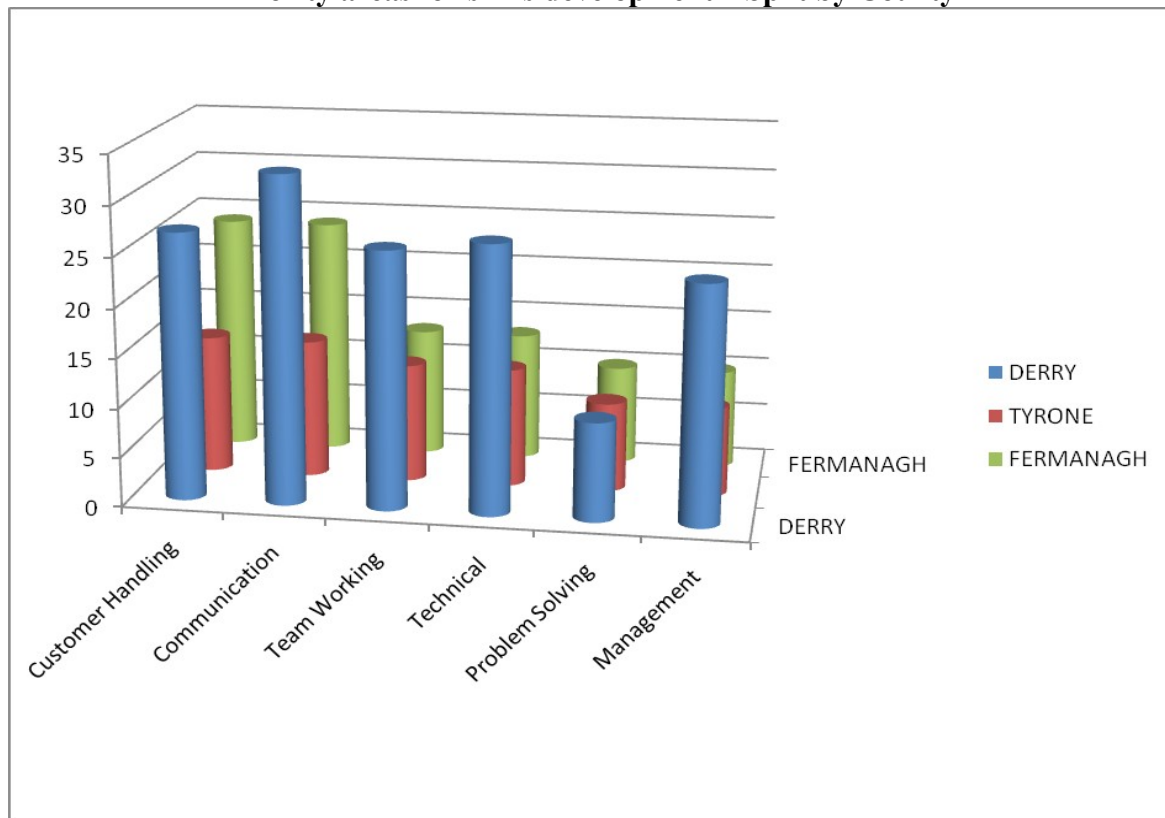
Given the importance of identifying and analyzing the local opinion on the key area of skills development, all companies were asked to rank in order of importance their priority areas for skills development. The results gathered and presented below serve to re-emphasize the analysis of the most relevant training themes presented earlier.



In the analysis of skills shortages within the WRTP area, the rankings are similar in many cases to the 2006 People 1st study summarised above, although given the difference in weighting and survey methodology, the percentages are of course different.

As with the People 1st study, Customer Handling and Communication make up the top two ranked places in terms of skills shortages. Technical skills shortages is the 3rd ranked theme with Technical and Problem Solving sharing 4th place. Management skills ranks lowest in terms of Skills Shortage priority areas for development.

Priority areas for skills development – Split by County



As can be seen from the diagram above, there is not much discrepancy between overall opinion and opinion split by County in terms of the Priority Analysis for Skills development.

5.7.1 Actions by companies to tackle skills shortages

From those companies, which expressed an opinion, various actions are being taken by the tourism providers in an attempt to close the skills gaps they have identified for their companies. The most common positive response is for providers to participate in training programmes such as those on offer through this initiative. However, it must be noted that the majority of companies either offered no response or stated that they were taking no action at all to close the skills gaps identified.

5.8 Industry opinion on Training Institutions

Our secondary research has identified the following ‘*Customer Service Standards*’ for N. Ireland

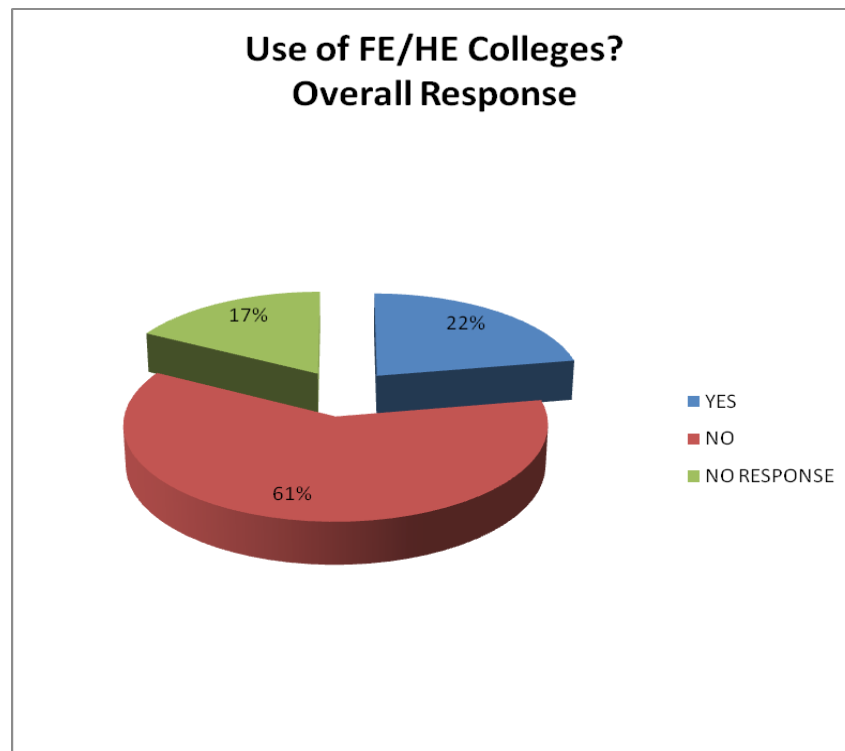
- 64 percent of employers believe new entrants to the sector lack the required skills and more critically 63 percent believe their current staff lack the necessary customer service skills to meet their business needs.
- Current training is not effectively tackling the lack of skills - the lack of a suitable qualification that employers recognize.
- The sector needs a suite of customer service qualifications at levels 2 and 3.

Given these facts, which were unveiled from the secondary research, this study sought to determine the opinion of and use by Tourism providers of the local colleges, which tend to be the primary training provider for the sector.

However in the case of those tourism providers, who responded to this study for the WRTP region, the use of the FE/HE colleges is very limited. Just over 20% of providers stated that they use FE/HE colleges, while on the other hand 6 out of every 10 providers, who offered a reply, do not use the colleges for training.

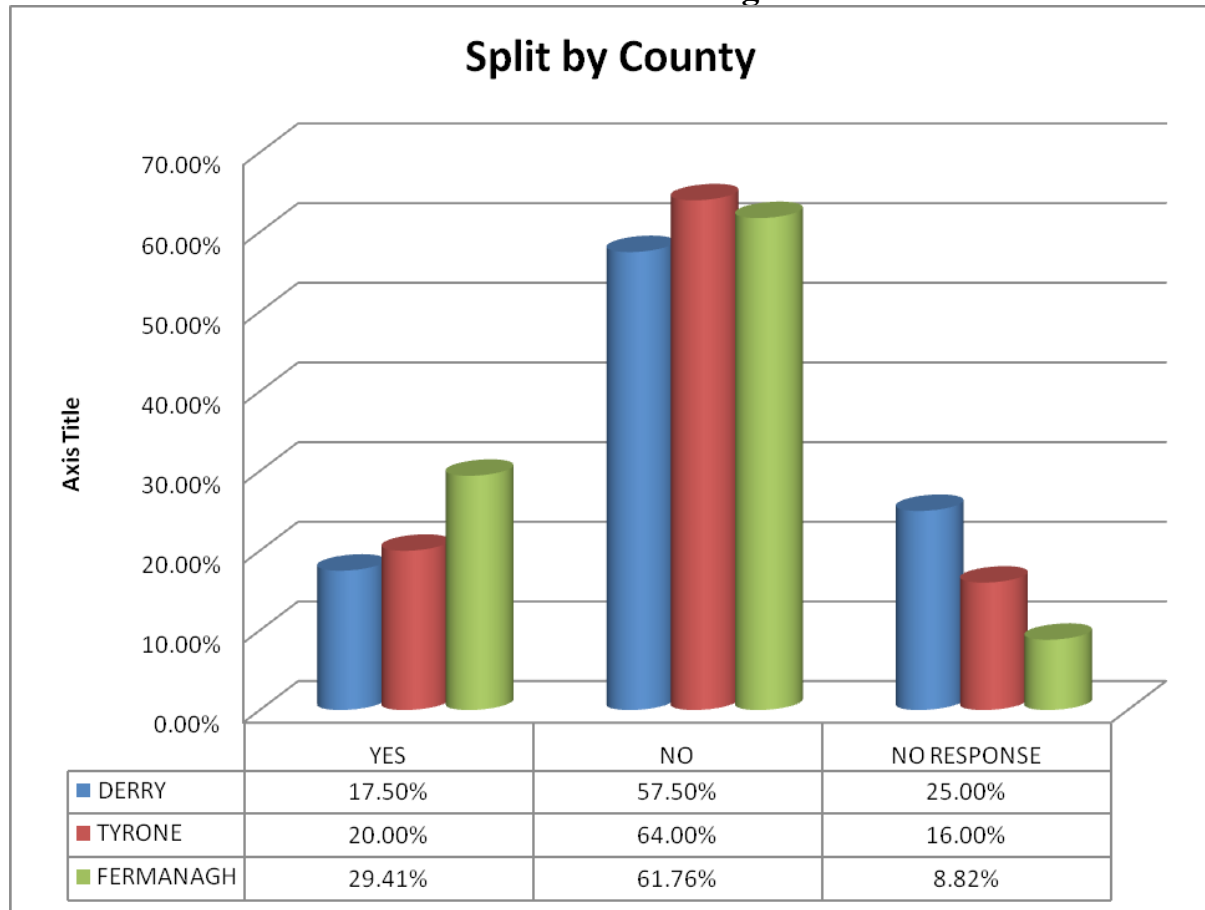
Care must also be taken in the interpretation of these results since a small number of companies stated that they don’t use the FE Colleges, yet they mention their contact with these colleges elsewhere in their feedback. It is likely therefore that the interpretation they offered was in terms of ‘current’ usage of those colleges rather than a more general interpretation of ever having used them.

Any use of the FE/HE colleges for training tends, not surprisingly, to be focused on local provision with the North West Regional College and the South West College.



A further analysis of why the companies aren't using the colleges reveals a lack of awareness of what is on offer training-wise at the colleges or perhaps, of more concern, that they didn't perceive the training on offer as relevant. Some of the companies actually prefer to source their training from alternative providers such as groups with access to rural diversification funding and of course a number of companies are at an insufficient stage of development to either benefit from training or to release staff for training.

Use of FE/HE Colleges



The analysis across the three counties is again broadly reflective of opinion across the entire region; however the largest uptake in terms of using the FE/HE colleges for training is from Co Fermanagh companies, 30% of which reported the use of the colleges for training purposes.

In terms of the companies' suggestions for improvement, the clear message was improved and more proactive communication between the colleges and the private sector, which would assist awareness, uptake and relevancy factors. Short, tailored and more accessible courses were also suggested recommendations by several of the providers.

5.9 Industry opinion on Tourism representative organizations and programmes

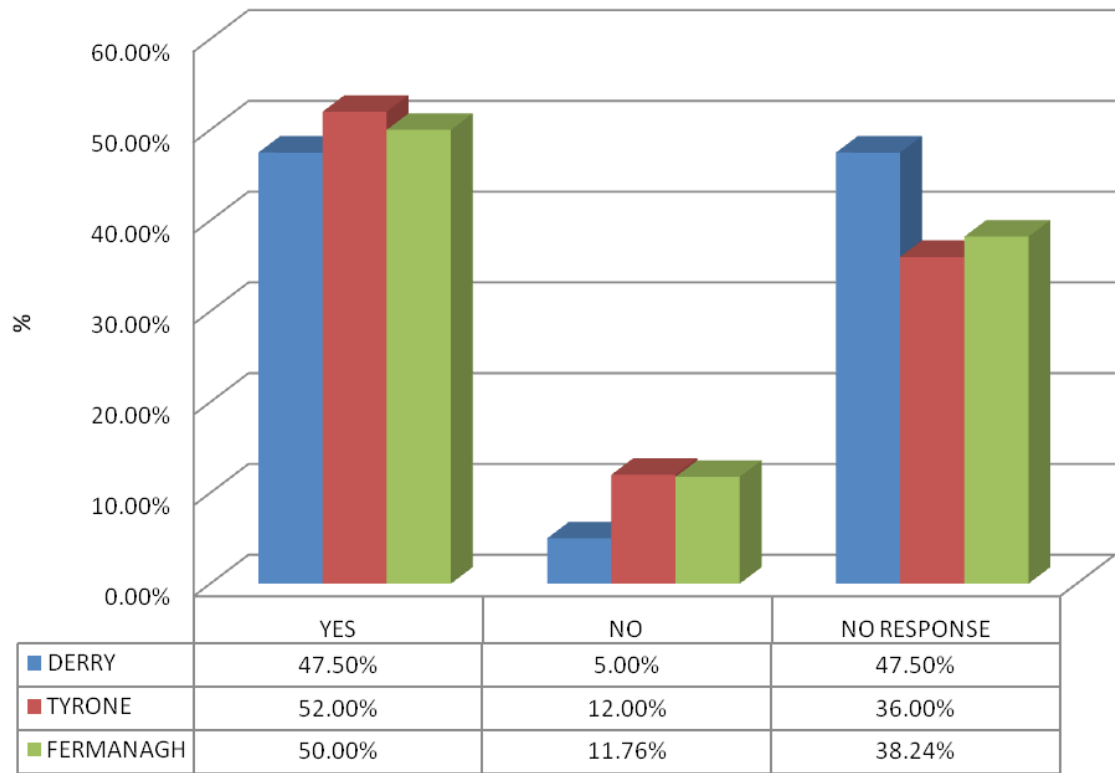
According to the NITB corporate plan, people (working in the tourism industry) must have the right ability and motivation. Tourism must be positioned as a premier career and supported with skills and development programmes that promote opportunity and commitment. NITB have committed to working with their key partners in the delivery of skills development amongst other factors. They have committed to deliver innovative training and development.

Many of the local authorities across the region have prioritised the Tourism sector in their development and specified the need to meet training needs in their local development plans. Over 50% of company respondents across all regions have participated in training programmes either through local authority, tourist office, NITB or other providers and at least half of these companies rated this training as useful. Only 10% believed the training they had received was of no use however 40% of companies did not offer an opinion on this question.



The figures broken down across each county of the WRTP region are again broadly reflective of the region as a whole although, as can be seen from the diagram below, the 'no-response' faction was greatest at 47.5% in the Co Derry area.

Split by County



5.10 Industry opinion on Existing Vacancies

In a recent survey (NI Assembly 2008) the following statistics were reported:

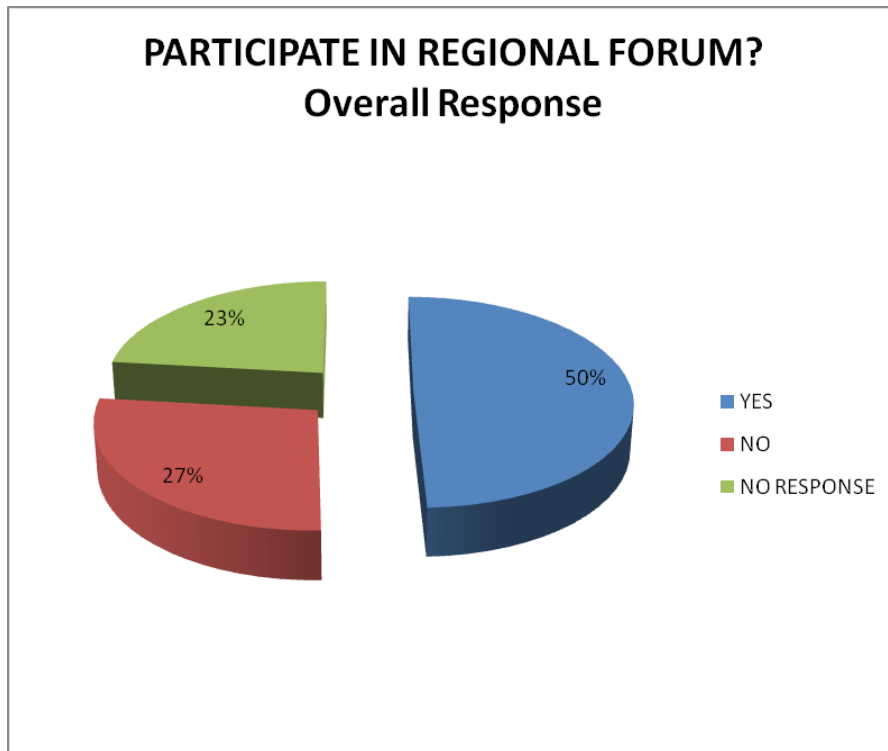
- “16% of employers reported that they had at least one vacancy
- 20% of employers reported difficulties retaining staff
- 13% of employers felt that their staff lacked the skills needed for their business
- 61% of vacancies for managers in the sector are proving hard to fill
- (1230 chefs and cooks do not have any qualifications and 1150 chefs and cooks are only qualified to Level 1)”

On a very similar vein, in this training needs analysis for the WRTP, 14% of companies reported that they had existing job vacancies with over 60% of company respondents reporting no vacancies at present.

20% of companies within the WRTP area have reported difficulties in recruiting for various positions including suitably qualified chefs and tour guides with multiple language abilities.

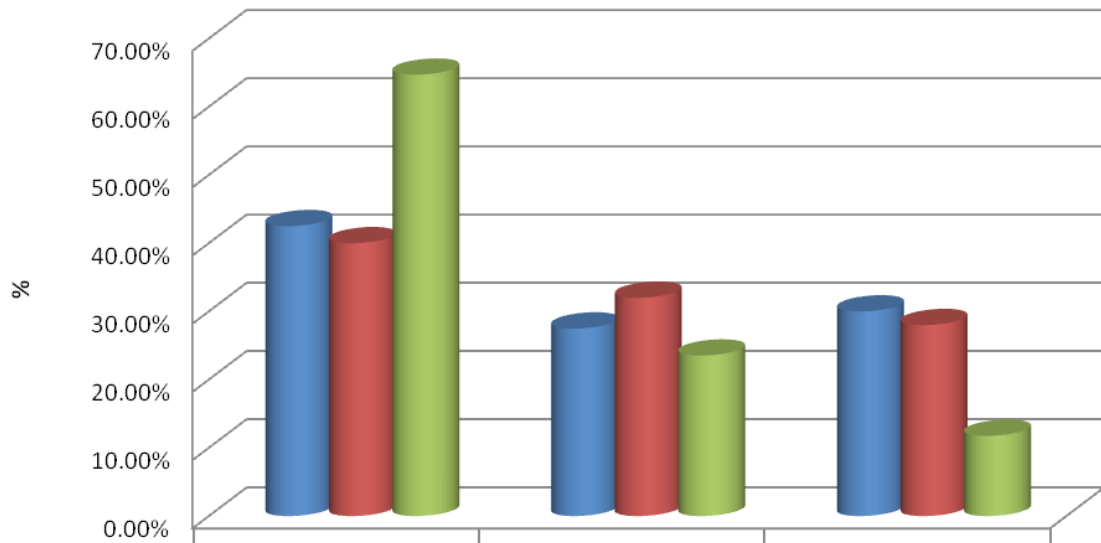
5.11 General Industrial Opinion.

One of the aspects, which the WRTP steering committee wished to explore, was the possibility of establishing a Regional Forum to discuss concerns and opportunities relating to training and skills shortages and other common topics. It would certainly appear that there is a good degree of demand for establishing this type of Forum with 50% of responding companies confirming their interest in participating in such a Forum



Demand is evidently greatest in for this type of forum in Fermanagh with over 60% of responding companies confirming their interest. Conversely demand is almost 25% lower in Tyrone and Derry, although the numbers not offering any response are much higher in Derry and Tyrone

Split by County

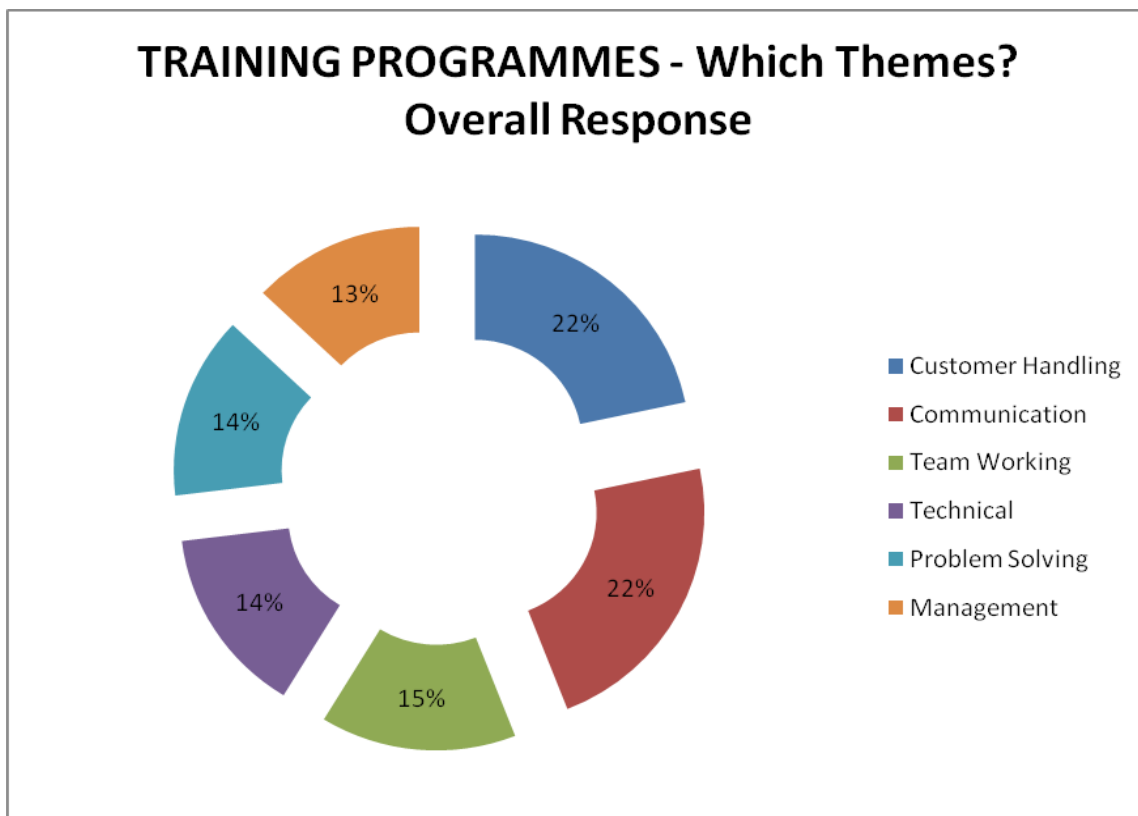


	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE
DERRY	42.50%	27.50%	30.00%
TYRONE	40.00%	32.00%	28.00%
FERMANAGH	64.71%	23.53%	11.76%

5.12 Priority themes – The key training needs to be included in a training programme

The final element of the training needs analysis involved a determination of training to be delivered through the capacity building element of this programme. Each tourism provider was asked: ‘As a participant in this study you will be invited to attend training programme(s) designed to meet the key training needs identified as part of the study.’ Again, each company was asked to prioritise from the themes depicted in the diagram below and it was on this basis that the training themes were identified and delivered.

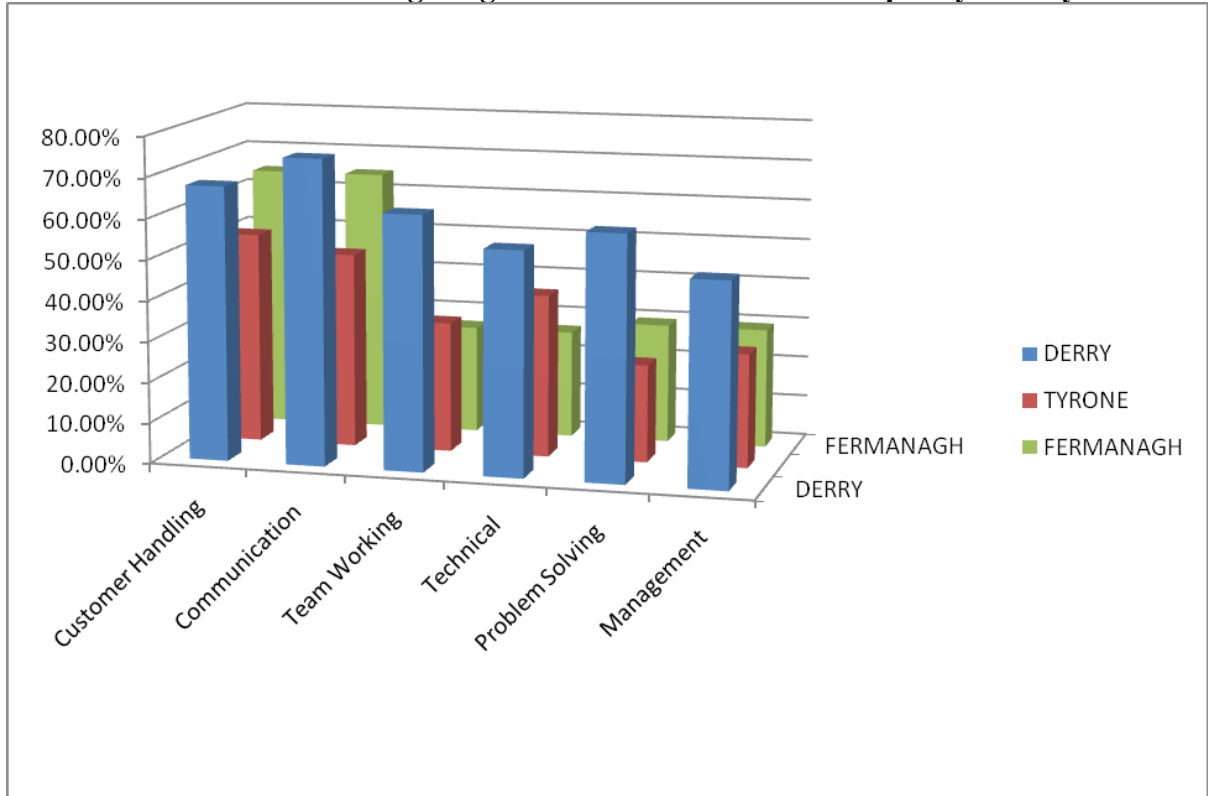
This final question served to re-emphasize the findings unveiled earlier in the study with reference to training needs and skills shortages. It is evident that the themes of Customer Care and Communication continue to maintain primacy in terms of the demand for training amongst the WRTP client companies. Demand for the remaining themes is very similar with the theme of Team Working at 15% edging ahead of the Technical and Problem solving themes both of which recorded demand of 14% from the tourism providers. The theme with the lowest demand was Management.



The picture of weighted demand broken down across each County, as can be seen below, demonstrates little variation from the split as identified for the region as a whole. There is some slight variation for example Problem Solving securing greater demand in Co Derry than anywhere else but not enough that demands further exploration.

What is perhaps noteworthy is that demand across the Co Derry area doesn't fall below 50% of respondees for any of the themes suggested.

Demand for Training Programmes – Which Themes? Split by County



6.0 Training Programmes delivered

As indicated in section 3 above, the North West Regional College worked with NORIBIC and the WRTP to identify suitable training themes for delivery under this Training Needs Analysis and Capacity Building Programme. Although the very tight timescale for delivery produced a significant challenge, the demand for and uptake on the programmes and the feedback from the Training programmes delivered all served to demonstrate a successful overall initiative.

The Registration numbers for the training programmes across each of the three Counties are summarized below:

	Derry	Dungannon	Enniskillen
Theme 1	17	14	21
Theme 2	21	14	23
Theme 3	20	16	20

Theme 1 – Exceeding Excellence when communicating with the customer.

Theme 2 – Communication & Marketing

Theme 3 – Building an effective Web Presence & E Marketing practice

Therefore 166 participants registered to take part in the training programmes, which were delivered over a 3 week period across the three different counties making up the WRTP catchment area. The programmes were also organized in such a manner that a different theme was delivered in each county in each of the three weeks thereby affording participants every opportunity to participate in all three training programmes.

Furthermore demand exceeded capacity for Theme 3 across each of the three counties and the NWRC have arranged additional classes to accommodate this excess demand. Those participants who registered to participate in the training are outlined in the Appendices below.

6.1 Feedback from the training sessions

The feedback from all the training sessions as summarized below is overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority of feedback ranks from very good to excellent in terms of the participants' overall opinion of the Training programmes and the delivery and content of the programmes provided.

While care was taken at all times to avoid problems with recruitment and training, some concern was expressed about sufficient venue notification for one session and about venue suitability for another. These concerns were addressed either directly with company participants or by consultation with the WRTP steering committee and included the delivery of additional training sessions.

The NWRC/NORIBIC are confident that they have identified a successful model of training for Tourism providers in the region and are grateful to the WRTP for the opportunity to have delivered this successful programme.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS – March/April 2009

THEME: 1 – Exceeding Excellence

LOCATION: Derry

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

16% fair, 42% very good & 42% excellent.

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

8% fair, 8% good, 43% very good & 42% excellent.

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Promote business through a website
- Encourage positive comments on trip advisor
- Staff training
- Customer evaluation
- Customer reviews – discuss with staff
- Handle complaints quickly
- Be more attentive to customer needs
- Provide a better level of service
- 1 to 1 interviews with customers
- Go the extra mile for customers
- Importance of networking
- Putting yourself in the customers shoes
- Understanding your customers
- Using customer demographics more effectively
- Producing a customer feedback strategy for the business
- Using the internet to follow up on feedback
- Benchmarking
- Taking part in training courses.

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Additional ½ day training as there was a lot to cover
- Less emphasis on hospitality sectors (hotels)

Q7: Further training needs:

- Help with the promotion of business on internet
- Designing a website
- E-Communications

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:
100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS – March /April 2009

THEME: 2 – Marketing & Communications

LOCATION: Derry

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

7% good, 57% very good, 36% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

21% good, 43% very good, 36% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Planning the year's activities & setting goals
- Advertising being smart
- Email circulars to customers
- Piggy back off other establishments
- Networking and business linkages
- Budgeting for advertising
- SWOT
- Improving internet marketing
- Using 'free' advertising
- Partnerships
- Designing a strategy
- Importance of familiarisation trips

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

93% yes, 7% no (1 person)

Q5: Materials were understandable:

93% yes, 7% no (1 person)

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Seating layout – circles or groups
- More examples of successful campaigns
- More networking of what is available
- Coffee opportunity at the end to further network

Q7: Further training needs:

- Accessing funding for heritage information / language training / translation costs
- Translating tourist literature in EU and other languages
- Web design
- Promotion / open day
- Designing a welcome pack for customers
- Costing a project
- More marketing skills

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

93% yes, 7% no (1 person)

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 3 – Web Presence & E-Marketing Practice

LOCATION: Derry

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

25% very good, 75% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

17% very good, 83% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Mail chimp
- Web development / design
- E-newsletter campaign
- Search engine optimisation
- Mailing lists
- Social networking sites
- Preparing a professional e-letter
- Improve marketing

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- More opportunities to attend similar workshops
- More in-depth look at mailshots
- Another training opportunity
- Follow up mentoring system

Q7: Further training needs:

- All IT training welcome for tourism industry
- How social networking sites can be used effectively for marketing
- Web design courses
- Going over material again
- E-commerce and online bookings
- Mentoring system

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

83% yes, 17% no (2 people).

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 1 – Exceeding Excellence

LOCATION: Dungannon

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

17% good, 25% very good, 58% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

8% good, 42% very good, 50% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Meeting & greeting customers from the customer's perspective
- Meeting with staff to review standards
- Suggestion boxes – optimise the service to customers
- Customer interaction methods
- Important of getting feedback, monitoring & evaluating the service
- Staff meetings & discussions
- Trip Advisor – online comments
- Useful case studies
- More staff training is important and staff appraisals
- Developing a customer services strategy
- Re-evaluation of product and service provided
- Identifying customer needs

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Training could be delivered over 2-3 days

Q7: Further training needs:

- Dealing with press writing and press releases
- Techniques for gathering customer feedback
- Website design and set-up.

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 2 – Marketing & Communications

LOCATION: Dungannon

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

11% good, 45% very good, 44% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

45% very good, 55% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- SWOT analysis
- E-Marketing (Meta tags on website)
- Web design
- E-Zine
- Better advertisements
- Better use of emails
- Business forecasting
- Implementing a marketing plan
- Promotion of honeypot sites in NI and ROI
- Segmentation
- Taking time to step out of the box

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Follow up support for attendees with any queries they may have
- A lot of information for 1 day session

Q7: Further training needs:

- Customer care / customer retention
- Dream weaver training
- Menu design training
- Workshop on providing meals
- Accounts
- Time management
- Welcome Host & Welcome All
- Dealing with the press – writing press releases etc
- Desktop Publishing
- E-Zines

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:
100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 3 – Web Presence & E-Marketing Practice

LOCATION: Dungannon

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

11% fair, 33% good, 56% very good

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

44% good, 44% very good, 12% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Looked at useful websites
- Helped understand web design
- Updating a website
- Exploring other relevant software
- Meta tags
- Promotional emails
- E-marketing offers
- Moving pictures to a website
- Mail chimp
- Making services better known
- Spreading advertising further
- More confidence on the internet

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

44% yes, 56% no

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Poor web connection
- Could have researched venue to ensure web connection
- More workshops

Q7: Further training needs:

- In-depth look at e-marketing
- More internet training
- Would do the training again with internet connection (maybe over 2 days)
- Manage and designing a website
- More IT training generally

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 1 – Exceeding Excellence

LOCATION: Fermanagh

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

14% good, 50% very good & 36% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

7% good, 50% very good, 43% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Evaluate literature
- Think of the customers more
- Emails
- Staff refreshers
- Customer service strategies
- Feedback – mystery shoppers & comment cards
- SOP training
- Applying customer feedback
- +1 public sector
- Opportunities from business SWOT
- Improving standards
- Customer focused
- Familiarisation trip for trade
- Target trade groups
- Ezines
- Sell business more positively

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

93% yes, 7% (1 person) no

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Not relevant to B & B – special packages for B & B's
- Would like to have got straight into the SWOT for business
- More attraction orientated
- Tasks could be better explained
- Making business linkages
- Poor venue (cold, food poor)
- More time needed

Q7: Further training needs:

- Web training
- Ezines
- Mail chimp

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 2 – Marketing & Communications

LOCATION: Fermanagh

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

86% very good, 14% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

71% very good, 29% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Marketing opportunities and awareness
- Web site design & upgrading a site
- Offers on accommodation – emailing customer's this information
- Planning ahead for the next 9 months
- Reviewing of SWOT analysis
- Services provided can be marketed as unique selling points

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Opportunity to connect live to the internet for examples

Q7: Further training needs:

- Email creation & delivery for marketing campaigns

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

100% yes.

WRTP EVALUATION ANALYSIS - March /April 2009

THEME: 3 – Web Presence & E-Marketing Practice

LOCATION: Fermanagh

Q1: Overall evaluation of training:

50% very good, 50% excellent

Q2: Delivery of content and presentation:

16% good, 16% very good, 68% excellent

Q3: Examples of application of learning following training:

- Search engine optimisation
- Mail chimp
- Google listings
- Meta tags
- Mail lists
- Domain names
- Email-marketing
- Sourcing contacts in relation to hits on websites

Q4: Sufficient interaction & participation during training:

100% yes

Q5: Materials were understandable:

100% yes

Q6: Improvements to training session:

- Venue (cold room)
- Session time could be longer
- Acknowledgement that knowledge of IT is essential for today's society in order to compete

Q7: Further training needs:

- More Mail Chimp Practice
- Any IT classes at all

Q8: Notification of future training initiative & establishing a regional training forum:

100% yes.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

The response rate to the primary market research survey was encouraging at an average of 15% across the region, which is above average for this type of survey and exceeds the response rate for similar studies across the whole of N. Ireland. Those providers who responded to the market research survey manage a wide variety of organisations over differing age. However, the majority of responses to the market research survey came mainly from organizations less than 10 years old and from tourism providers concentrating on accommodation – Hotels, B&Bs, Self Catering etc.

The primary market research was focused on the following areas:

- Industry opinion on Training Requirements
- Industry opinion on Skills Shortages
- Industry opinion on Training Institutions
- Industry opinion on Tourism representative organisations and programmes
- Industry opinion on Existing Vacancies
- General Industrial Opinion.

Company opinion on whether qualifications are essential in running their business was fairly evenly split between yes and no, and in fact the negative response was the majority one in Tyrone. Yet over 60% of companies conceded that training programmes do help their companies to develop, with Co Tyrone responses offering the most favourable response rate to this question.

In terms of the most relevant training themes, these were clearly and consistently Customer Care and Communication throughout the study although Team Working, Technical skills and Management Skills also featured with reasonable prominence with little sub-regional variation.

Almost half of the Tourism providers offer in-house training to their staff at least annually but more frequently on a quarterly basis and within the areas of customer service and improved efficiencies. Access to New Technologies and improved Communication Awareness are the more prominent emerging training themes within these companies.

Skills shortages are perceived to be greatest in the areas of Customer Handling and Communication, which is reflective of previous national studies on this topic by organisations such as People 1st. As has been referred to above, Technical skills are starting to creep up this scale also. It is perhaps somewhat worrying that the majority of companies are taking only very limited action to address this imbalance.

Over 60% of Tourism providers claim they do not use the FE Colleges for training citing the primary reason as a lack of awareness or lack of relevance of current and available courses. On the other hand, approximately 50% of providers have participated in training programmes on offer through their local tourism agency, local authority or the NITB and have believed these to be useful.

In keeping with statistics from previous similar studies, 14% of companies have reported job vacancies and 20% of companies have difficulty filling some slots including suitably qualified chefs.

It is noteworthy that half the companies are interested in participating in a regional forum to discuss areas such as skill shortages/training requirements etc.

Finally, each of the companies were asked to single out the training themes in which they would be willing to participate through this particular capacity building programme. Again, not surprisingly the most prominent themes were Customer Handling and Communication.

In the training programmes, which were devised in response to the research, the theme of Communication & Marketing proved to be the most popular.

7.2 Recommendations

Although Technological developments have presented an increase in demand as regards training requirements for tourism providers, the more traditional themes of Communication and Customer Care continue to pre-dominate demand. Furthermore, evidence from this programme demonstrates that when such programmes are offered on a tailor-made basis, there will be more than sufficient demand for participation from local tourism providers. Some providers have even suggested that they would be willing to pay for such a service.

Training Institutions (FE Colleges) should take note of this persisting demand when devising accredited courses and the relevant statutory bodies and tourism agencies should make provision for this in their strategic development and operational plans.

Qualifications are clearly not always deemed essential by tourism providers who responded to the WRTP needs analysis. Given the size and scale at which many small providers operate, this is no real surprise. However these operators do concede that training programmes help their companies to develop. Given this fact and the response to the training programmes offered through this programme, it would seem reasonable to expect a fair response to any future programmes offered, provided they were in line with the relevant themes identified.

The Tourism providers, who offer staff training, tend in the main to be larger providers, with sufficient resources. However, the majority of providers, who responded to this Needs Analysis, are from small business. Although some offer training from their owner/managers, many concede that this is insufficient for their needs. There would therefore appear to be the potential to devise tailor-made courses, not necessarily with accreditation, and target these at smaller companies.

While, as is indicated above, demand is persistently high for training themes such as Customer Care and Communication, this Needs Analysis has revealed a growing demand for courses which facilitate access to eMarketing and Web Design etc. Again this is something both the WRTP and the FE sector need to bear in mind when developing plans and delivering courses. However care should be taken in planning the delivery of such courses as feedback from this programme reveals that some companies have little or no ICT experience and all are not therefore starting from a common base. Furthermore, one-day intensive courses may not be sufficient or suitable to meet demand as there is a tendency for trainees to tire and gain little knowledge in the last third of the day.

The FE colleges have clearly a role to play in the provision of training for companies from the Tourism sector. However, recognition must be given to the feedback from this analysis and communication with and relevancy to the small providers in particular is something the education sector has to address.

There does not appear to be a consistently high number of vacancies in this sector, but one in five companies has reported that they have problems filling certain jobs. More analysis of this fact should be undertaken but it is a problem which has long been associated with the tourism industry.

At least 50% of companies in the WRTP region have confirmed that they would be willing to participate in a Regional Forum to discuss common areas of concern and opportunity such as skills, training and capacity building. The WRTP should consider convening a facilitated Forum and perhaps tie such a meeting with the presentation of outcomes from this needs analysis and, if resources permit, future training possibilities.

APPENDICES

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - DERRY

THEME 1: EXCEEDING EXCELLENCE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE CUSTOMER

DATE: Thursday 26th February 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: NWRC, CONFERENCE ROOM, NORTHLAND BUILDING

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Jean Hegarty	info@museumoffreederry.org 02871 360880
Conor Donnelly	info@beech-hill.com 02871 349279
Margaret Edwards	museums@derrycity.gov.uk 02871 377331
Emma Moran	accounts@whitehorsehotel.biz 02871 860606
Rosemary Karaoglan	info@ionainn.com 02871343529
David Hunter	info@derryfarmcottages.com 02871301214
Stephen Brown	info@theadventureteam.co.uk 07513868476
Trevor McGarrigle	barrontop@hotmail.co.uk 02871398649
Margaret Hyndman	groarty@btinternet.com 02871 261403
Caroline White	info@firtreeshotel.com 02871382382
Berni Long	dunree@eircom.net 003537493 61817 Fort Dunree
Patricia O Donnell & Brendan Doherty	Patricia.odonnell@btinternet.com 02871337654
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Manuella Curulli	North west Academy
Rosalia Moretti	North West Academy
Patricia McLaughlin	Gortnadrum House (77741289) patricia@gortnadrumhouse.com

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - DERRY

THEME 2: COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

DATE: Wednesday 4th March 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: NWRC, NORTHLAND BUILDING

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Sarah Sloan	Drumcovitt.feeny@btinternet.com ph 02877781224
Jean Hegarty	info@museumoffreederry.org 02871360880
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Margaret Edwards	museums@derrycity.gov.uk 02871377331
Jayne Phillips	accounts@whitehorsehotel.biz 02871 860606
Suzanne Moran	info@ionainn.com 02871343529
David Hunter	info@derryfarmcottages.com 02871301214
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Berni Long	Fort Dunree dunree@eircom.net 003537493 61817
Jennifer Cochrane	Springwell Manor Health Farm 02870 353505

	jen@springwellmanor.com
Anne Teague	An Teach Ban Greencastle, Omagh. 02880761786 teamteague@aol.com
Aoife Thomas	DVCB (Conference@derryvisitor.com) 02871 377577
Mary McKnight	Best Western White Horse Hotel
Nuala Griffin	Inner City/Outer City Tours

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - DERRY

THEME 3: BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEB PRESENCE & E-MARKETING PRACTICE

DATE: Wednesday 11th March 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: NWRC, Staff Development Room, LRC, Tower Building

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Sarah Sloan	Drumcovitt.feeny@btinternet.com 02877781224
Jean Hegarty	info@museumoffreederry.org 02871360880
Brenda Donnelly	info@beech-hill.com 02871349279
Trevor Mc Garrigle	barrontop@hotmail.co.uk 02871 398649
Patricia O Donnell	Patricia.odonnell@btinternet.com 02871337654
John Hyndman	groarty@btinternet.com 02871261403
David Hunter	info@derryfarmcottages.com 02871301214
Anne Marie Gallagher	info@creggancountrypark.com 02871 363133
Stephen Brown	info@theadventureteam.co.uk Ph 07513868476
Nuala Griffiths	nualagriffiths@hotmail.com ph 02871313172
Liam Horner	liam@hornergallery.com ph 02879468178
Elaine Walker	Aisling House
Petra Herrmann	About Ulster

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - DERRY

THEME 3 (session 2): BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEB PRESENCE & E-MARKETING PRACTICE

DATE: Friday 6 March 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: NWRC, Staff Development Room, LRC, Tower Building

Name	Company
Barry Nelson	Amore B&B ph 02871 219213
Mark Kellie	North West Academy
Karen McIntyre	info@firtreeshotel.com 02871 382382
Jenny Martin/Kevin Hipsley	jenni@ghpress.com 02871 364413
Debbie Sheehan	Glenash Chalets
Lucinda B Houston	B.H. Estate Shepherds Retreat
Odhran Dunne	DVCB
Suzanne Moran	info@ionainn.com ph 02871343529

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY – DUNGANNON

THEME 1: EXCEEDING EXCELLENCE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE CUSTOMER

DATE: Monday 9th March 2009 (10am – 5pm)

LOCATION: Cohannon Inn, Ballynakilly Rd, Dungannon

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Mary McGee	Mary.mcgee@dungannon.gov.uk ph 02887767259
Alison Buchanan	Mary.Mcgee@dungannon.gov.uk ph 02887767259
Norma Crooks	info@otterlodge.com ph 02886765427
Katrina Samoilova	info@otterlodge.com ph 02886765427
Tayna Hamchevici	info@otterlodge.com ph 02886765427
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Karen Campbell	info@bhdd.co.uk ph 02887728080
Tayna Thom	theroyal-hotel@btconnect.com ph 02886762224
Gwen Dixon	gwen@tyronecrystal.com 02887725335
Paula Bradley	An Creagan Visitor Centre – info@creagan.com ; 02880761112
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Deirdre McKee	Sperrins Tourism 02886747700 info@sperringstourism.com

Karen Lambe	karenlambe@hotmail.com 0287729995
	Dine Restaurant
Bronagh Heron	DSTBC

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY – DUNGANNON

THEME 2: COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

DATE: Wednesday 25th February 2009 (10am – 5pm)

LOCATION: Cohannon Inn, Ballynakilly Rd, Dungannon

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Kilmaddy TIC	
Kilmaddy TIC	
Kathryn Nelson	info@kilymuckfarm.com 02887758240
Vicky Shilliday	info@otterlodge.com 02886765427
CANCELLED	
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Elaine Donaghy	Sperrins Tourism marketing@sperrinstourism.com
Deirdre McKee	Sperrins Tourism info@sperrinstourism.com
Gwen Dixon	gwen@tyronecrystal.com ph 02887725335
Cathal Gormley	gormley128@btinternet.com ph07979221855
Kenneth Young	Canos Pizzeria
A Buchanan	Flavours of Tyrone

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY – DUNGANNON

THEME 3: BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEB PRESENCE & E-MARKETING PRACTICE

DATE: Friday 13th March 2009 (10am – 5pm)

LOCATION: Cohannon Inn, Ballynakilly Rd, Dungannon

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Mary McGee	Mary.mcgee@dungannon.gov.uk ph 02887767259
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W/L Elaine Donaghey	Sperrin Tourism info@sperringstourism.com Ph 0288674770
Paidin Loughran	paidinloughran@btinternet.com Camaghy Cottage 02887758453

W/L An Creagan	Advised they could attend
W/L Taste of Tyrone	Advised they could attend
Mary McKeown	
W/L Ann Teague	02880 761786
W/L Patrick & Alice Douglas	Ashview House Bed & Breakfast
P Douglas	Ashview House B&B
A Douglas	Ashview House B&B

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY – FERMANAGH

THEME 1: EXCEEDING EXCELLENCE WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH THE CUSTOMER

DATE: Monday 2nd March 2009 (10am – 5pm)

LOCATION: Clinton Centre

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Elaine Walker	info@aislinghouse.com Tel 02889531124
Derek Robinson	Longfields Lodge B&B longfields.fermanagh@virgin.net
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Paula Meehan	Belmore Court Hotel- admin@motel.co.uk Shauna
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Briege McCusker	Erne Heritage Tours/Blue Badge Tours adam4eves@aol.com
June Hetherington	Lough Erne Golf Resort
CANCELLED	
Mary Leonard	Ph07764564305
Cancelled	
Charlotte Wilson	Charlotte.wilson@fermanagh.gov.uk Ph 02866323110
Nuala White	Castle Hume Court 02866326111

Finola McCauley	Castle Hume Court 02866326111
Damien O Keefe	Little Crom Cottages ph 07725818640 68amien@littlecromcottages.com
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Ciaran McGandy	Westville Hotel
Niall Newman	Westville Hotel
Anthony Doherty	Melon Country Hotel sinead@melloncountryhotel.com
Andy O Malley	Melon Country Hotel sinead@melloncountryhotel.com
Susan Morrow	Manor House Marine 028686 28100
Eileen Turner	B&B , S/C
B. Cairns	Fermanagh District Council

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT**TRAINING DELIVERY – FERMANAGH****THEME 2: COMMUNICATION & MARKETING****DATE: Wednesday 11th March 2009 (10am – 5pm)****LOCATION: TBC**

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Elaine Walker	info@aislinghouse.com ph 02889531124
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Gabrielle Tottenham	sales@yogaholidaysireland.com
Olive Cooke	The Gables Glassmullagh
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Terry McCartney	Belmore Court Hotel admin@motel.co.uk
tbc	Manor House x 3
Mary Montgomery	Clanabogan Country House
Briege McCusker	Erne Heritage Tours/ Blue Badge Tours
tbc	Lough Erne Golf Resort
Charlotte Wilson	K.C.D.A.
Nuala White	Castle Hume Court
Finola McCauley	Castle Hume Court
Damien O Keefe	Little Crom Cottages
Patricia Charlton	Hescrea Lodge
Joanne Walsh	Westville Hotel
Amanda	West Wing Crom Castle
Martin McGuigan	07714835977
John Houston	K.C.D.A.
Ian McCutcheon	Lakeland Tours

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - FERMANAGH

THEME 3: BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEB PRESENCE & E-MARKETING PRACTICE

DATE: Wednesday 25th February 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: Enniskillen Community Development Project, Queens St

DELEGATE NAME	CONTACT DETAILS (EMAIL / TEL NO)
Elaine Walker	info@aislinghouse.com
Mandy Mahon	info@castlearchdale.com
Gabrielle Tottenham	sales@yogaholidaysireland.com
Charlotte Gordan	info@mullinahinch.com
Terry McCartney	Belmore Court Hotel
Kate McAnnoon	National Trust
Mary Montgomery	Carnaboghan Country House
Briege McCusker	Erne Heritage Tours
John Cunningham	Erne Heritage Tours
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Ramsey Yionu	The States Bed & Breakfast
Eileen Turner	Bed & Breakfast

WRTP – TOURISM INDUSTRY TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TRAINING DELIVERY - FERMANAGH

THEME 3 (Session 2): BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE WEB PRESENCE & E-MARKETING PRACTICE

DATE: Wednesday 25th March 2009 (10am - 5pm)

LOCATION: Enniskillen Community Development Project, Queens St

Mary Leonard	Avondale B&B 07764564305
Charlotte Wilson	02866989110
Nuala White	Castle Hume Court
Finola McCauley	Castle Hume Court 02866326111
Bernie	Abourragh Farm House 02866398984
Patricia Charlton	Hescrea Lodge 02866388659
Amanda	West Wing Crom Castle
Colette Ferguson	Westville Hotel 02866 320333 Collette.hr.services@gmail.com
Pauleen Carey	National Museums NI tel – 90395101 Pauleen.carey@nmni.com
Damien O Keefe	Crom Cottages 07725818640