A Comparative Study of Strategic HRD Approaches for Workforce Planning in the Tourism Industry

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This study compares the outcomes of two often used approaches for strategic HRD planning. Using methods framed within a strategic HRD planning framework the outcomes of a qualitative primary data approach are examined against quantitative labor market projections in a study of the future Minnesota tourism workforce. Results show each planning approach produced differences with a combined method suggested as the best for future projections on the size, composition, and HRD needs of the workforce.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Development, Workforce Projections, Tourism Industry

As U.S. baseball legend Yogi Berra once observed, "it's tough to make predictions, especially about the future." However, human resource development (HRD) professionals are increasingly tasked to assist organizations with future focused strategic planning initiatives to create projections on the size, composition, and skill level of the workforce. Based on these projections a range of HRD policies, practices, and initiatives can be planned to ensure that the workforce has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform. A number of different approaches are used in making workforce projections. For the purpose of this study two major approaches are reviewed and compared. The setting for this study is the increasingly important, dynamic, and global tourism and hospitality industry.

HRD has recognized the need for a future orientation to give HRD practitioners a role in shaping organizational strategy (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Ruona and Gibson (2004) recently described how human resource management (HRM) and HRD are converging in an evolving approach to the management of human resources. Adopting this viewpoint requires that all activities associated with managing and developing human resources be viewed as contributing to an organizations' competitive advantage in a strategically proactive manner (Brockbank, 1999). This means that traditional operationally reactive boundaries between HRM and HRD functions need to be removed. Consequently, HRD scholars and practitioners are now urged to play a greater role in workforce planning, both for immediate and more long-term projected human resource needs. It is now widely accepted that future workforce planning at the organizational level must be aligned with the mission of the organization and the changes occurring within the organization's external environment (Barney & Wright, 1998). The same argument can be made for workforce planning at the industry level where the principal mission and delivery of core products or services of the industry must be aligned with changes in the external environment of the industry.

One particularly interesting industry to explore is tourism and hospitality. Of both global and national significance, tourism performs important economic and social functions. The World Tourism Organization (2005) indicated that international tourism receipts in 2003 were about 6 percent of worldwide exports of goods and services. In the U.S. tourism is supported by millions of employees with 7.3 million tourism direct generated jobs in the U.S. representing $162 billion in payroll (Travel Industry Association of America, 2005). Only since the 1950s have formal tourism educational programs existed and therefore, the entry into the tourism and hospitality career varies. Regardless of entry, nearly 75% of the workforce is female also relying heavily upon new workers, particularly immigrants. For the tourism and hospitality industry, factors such as heightened competition, new technologies, growing levels of legal compliance, changes in demographics and workforce composition, an increased diversification of services, as well as an acknowledged responsibility to increase the quality of life for employees are exerting pressure on the industry. Such changes are additional to ongoing security concerns and changes in travel and visitor behavior resulting from the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 and the global war on terror. External driven change can have a significant impact on the supply of human resources and the subsequent development needs of the workforce. The labor market has been identified as a dominant feature of the management of human resources in tourism (Riley, Ladkin, & Szivas, 2002). As a result, the tourism industry places great emphasis on information related to quantity and quality of current and future human resources. The two main sources of information are external environmental scanning embedded with a strategic human resource planning framework and labor market analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The body of theory around strategic management, with its roots in the disciplines of business policy, organizational theory, and organizational behavior, continues to expand to an ever widening number of fields including tourism (Tse & Olsen, 1999). A number of theoretical frameworks and models for strategic HRD have appeared in the literature (Gilley, Quatro, & Lynham, 2003). Although each framework for strategic HRD has somewhat differing features almost all share a method for determining a strategic response to challenges confronting current and future human resources. In general terms this method involves an examination of the external factors that may create change through a process designed to identify key characteristics of an industry's environment to monitor significant trends in order to make appropriate managerial action in response (Craft, 1988; Rothwell & Kazansas, 1994). This process is known as external environmental scanning. External environmental scanning research has tended to focus on single large for-profit firms in the U.S. Yet, the suitability of this approach to an entire industry to identify HRD issues has not been examined nor has the results of this method been compared to existing secondary labor market analysis data on future workforce projections.

Several studies have examined the sectors of the external environment scanned by executives and the attention paid to each sector (Auster & Choo, 1993; Daft, Sormunen, & Parks, 1988). Findings indicate strong firm and industry specific preferences. In other words, individual organizations and the industry within which they operate tend to only pay attention to those areas of the external environment perceived to offer the greatest threats and opportunities. Research on the frequency of scanning activity tends to find an increase in times of high strategic uncertainty (Daft et al., 1988). The sources of information for environmental scanning show top level managers preferring personal sources over impersonal sources such as government reports, newspapers, and published research findings (Jennings & Jones, 1999; Keegan, 1974). Yet, the accuracy of data for future workforce planning efforts from personal sources of information compared to impersonal existing sources is unknown. This study addresses this research need.

An alternative method for workforce planning is labor market analysis. As a branch of economics, the study of labor markets should attract attention from HRD scholars and practitioners given the acceptance of economics, along with systems theory and psychology, as core foundations for the HRD field (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Yet, as Wang and Holton (2005) recently commented, the understanding of economics in HRD has been narrowly confined with numerous economic theories and analysis techniques having received scant attention in the HRD literature. Ehrenberg and Smith (2003), in their text on modern labor economics, noted that economic theories of the labor market rely heavily on labor market information which is material and data about the demand and supply for labor within a certain market. A labor market could be a community, a city, a region, country, or an industry. Labor market analysis reviews demographic, economic, social, and labor force information and data. It should describe the characteristics of the supply of labor including human resources who are currently workers or potential workers in the labor market. Furthermore, it should also provide information on job opportunities in the labor market and human resource needs of employers (Handbook of labour market information, 2000).

Aims of the Study

The overall aim of the study was to compare and contrast the two dominant methods for conducting strategic HRD planning; namely an external environmental scanning interview with a sample of industry leaders and data from various labor market analysis sources. The study also sought to test the suitability of both methods to make a preliminary profile of the tourism/hospitality employee and the overall size and composition of the tourism workforce. The U.S. state of Minnesota was used as the data collection site with the year 2020 selected as the target date for future projections. More specifically, the study sought to address the following four questions:

To create a picture of the Minnesota tourism workforce in the year 2020 by:

1. Conducting primary data collection with key leaders in Minnesota's tourism industry to examine workforce projections in 2020 in terms of population forecasts; labor force size and composition; and external environmental trends likely to impact the tourism industry and its workforce.
2. To conduct secondary labor market data analysis of existing sources of tourism industry workforce projections in 2020 in terms of population forecasts; labor force size and composition; and external environmental trends likely to impact the tourism industry and its workforce.
3. To compare and contrast the outcomes from both HRD planning approaches.
4. Use the results from both approaches to propose strategies to identify future sources of human resources and approaches for HRD for the Minnesota tourism industry 2020 workforce.

Method

This section reports on the research design, sample, instrument, and data analysis techniques used.

Research Design

The first part of the study adopted a survey research design using telephone interviews to obtain data from individuals on projected changes in the external environment of the tourism industry. A mixed-method approach that relied heavily on qualitative data from semi-structured interviews was used. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The second part of the study examined the projected characteristics of the Minnesota tourism workforce in 2020 using existing data sources. The interviews were conducted tourism industry leaders who because of their senior position were likely to be aware of the future trends impacting the industry. The target population for this study consisted of executive directors of professional organizations and trade associations who serve the tourism industry within the state of Minnesota. These included State Tourism Offices, festival and event associations, State Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs), and hotel and lodging associations. These associations and their executive directors were identified by reviewing telephone directories and websites related to the Minnesota tourism industry. The name and contact information for the executive directors, or similarly titled position, was obtained producing a final sampling frame consisting of 15 associations. Efforts were made to contact all 15 executive directors by telephone. At the completion of the data collection stage of the study, ten executive directors were successfully contacted and all agreed to participate in the interview. The five remaining directors could not be reached despite numerous telephone attempts. This results in a 67% response rate.

The data for the second stage of the study utilized existing secondary sources. In conducting a search for existing labor market data on workforce projections in the tourism industry through to the year 2020, the Internet search engine 'Google' was utilized. Keyword combination searches such as 'workforce projections', 'human resources', 'tourism/hospitality industry', 'employment', '2020', were used to identify existing labor market analysis sources related to the tourism industry. Data files and summaries of workforce projection research were found on the websites of the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Census Bureau. In the U.S. a vast amount of data on labor markets is produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The BLS is a division of the U.S. Department of Labor, although it predates the department having been established in 1886 after receiving considerable support from the labor reform movement (Goldberg,& Moye, 1985). As Manser (1998) described, BLS data are also used for labor economics research and analysis, often combined with various data sets produced by other agencies. At the state level the primary source of labor market research was the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). A search of libraries found all of the same publications (but no additional sources) in print version testifying to the current electronic dissemination priorities of governmental agencies. This data from both federal and state government were reviewed to gain trend patterns on the likely size and composition of the tourism workforce for the nation and Minnesota.

Instrument

The telephone interview contained two main sections. The first section used a qualitative approach to gather data on likely changes in the relevant external environmental sectors that might impact the future tourism workforce within the state. The external environment sectors used in this study were (1) economic; (2) demographic; (3) political and legislative; and (4) technology. These four sectors are common to most environmental scanning frameworks used for HRD planning (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). These four external environment sectors served as a guide around which semi-structured questions were asked to elicit responses related to anticipated changes in the external environment of Minnesota's tourism industry and the possible impact these changes may have on the future tourism workforce. A second section of the instrument used a quantitative approach to obtain data from respondents on their views on two issues that the literature has identified as crucial to successful strategic HRD efforts for future workforce planning, namely, identifying barriers to HRD and identifying responsibility for ensuring that the workforce has the required skills, knowledge, and abilities. The questions were developed for this study but similar items were used in research to identify HRD needs in New Zealand's tourism industry (Business and Economic Research Ltd., 2004). Example items from the 12 questions related to potential barriers for HRD included lack of time for doing HRD, lack of motivation of employees, and lack of knowledge about the benefits of HRD. Six questions explored who had responsibility for ensuring that the workforce has the required skills, knowledge, and abilities with level of agreement statements considering the employee, their supervisor, the owner/manager of the organization, high school teachers, college faculty, and policy makers. Both the potential barriers and responsibility for ensuring the workforce of the future has the needed skills were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale with response categories 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = somewhat disagree; 3 = neutral; 4 = somewhat agree; and 5 = strongly agree. The responses to the closed-ended quantitative questions were analyzed with frequency and means reported. The responses to the open-ended questions were content analyzed to identify

common themes. Existing data from labor market analysis sources was not manipulated or subject to further analysis.

Results

The results from the external environmental scanning interview are presented first followed by results from the labor market analysis data.

Results from the External Environmental Scanning

Analysis of interview data with industry leaders produced a number of common themes. The themes identified from the assessment of the external environment sectors are presented in the following order: economic, demographic, political and legislative, and technology. The ten executives participating in the study listed a wide range of economic trends that they thought were likely to impact Minnesota tourism over the next 15 years. The most frequently reported responses related to the condition of the domestic economy, with more specific examples stated including the inflation rate, indicators of consumer confidence, and the health of the stock market. These were noted as being related to the second most frequent category of responses, the economic situation in Minnesota and especially the amount of state funded support for the tourism industry. Three respondents made specific mention of the cost of fuel/gasoline as a major economic trend which could impact the industry. Two separate human resources issues related to the cost of labor were frequently mentioned in the economic sector scan; the level of the minimum wage and the necessity to provide increased benefits to employees.

The respondents seemed to have little difficulty in listing several projected changes in the demographic composition of the state and its tourism industry workforce. All but one manager specifically referenced the aging population and increasing median employee age within the tourism industry. With a shortage of younger workers many executive directors noted the need for alternative employment arrangements including part-time work and the need to make tourism an attractive industry for baby boomers who may have previously retired from a first career but wish to remain active in the workforce. Similarly, the increasing diversity of the state and its labor force was frequently reported with several noting the need for tourism employees with greater cross-cultural knowledge and second language abilities.

The assessment of the political and legislative changes likely to be most significant in their impact to the Minnesota tourism industry provided a wide range of responses. It should be mentioned that the executive directors participating in the study were quite passionate about many of the issues raised in this section. The issues they raised ranged from the need to retain the current law of no sales tax on apparel in Minnesota, increased scrutiny on non-citizens illegally working in the industry, and the provision of wage credits for employee earning tips as a significant portion of their compensation. A number of issues surrounding the work of the Department of Homeland Security were seen as potential major impacts including the policy requirement for international visitors to have biometric passports, the intrusion of privacy with fingerprints and eye scans, and the extended time required to process visa applications. At the state level major political and legislative changes were noted as potentially impacting the tradition and belief of the need for the state to continue to support the tourism industry.

Technological changes thought to possibly create an impact to the tourism industry in Minnesota focused heavily on the expanded role of the Internet as a powerful communication medium. The Internet was seen as increasing its role within the industry to include an even greater presence in reservations/bookings, advertising and promotions, vacation planning, and e-commerce. Technological advancements were also seen as reducing the cost of management and maintenance freeing employee time to focus on customer service. The need for an ever increasingly technology literate workforce also emerged as a key theme identified by several respondents.

With the four segments of the external environment scanned the respondents were then asked for their views on what major human resource changes would occur in the Minnesota tourism workforce. Most of the human resource changes focused on issues raised in the demographic and technological sectors. The most frequently reported responses in technology related to increasing the skills of employees with computers whereas, the most frequently related to demographic changes related to employees able to both work with and be representative of the an older and more diverse population. Economic changes were also mentioned, although not as frequently, in relation to the need to offer more competitive compensation and benefits to tourism industry employees. Two interesting human resource changes predicted are worthy of mention. The first was the suggestion from several respondents that human resources management and development professionals within the industry will be responsible for shifting the perception that those workers unable to find work in other settings gravitate towards tourism. The second issue addressed the need for human resource management leadership to show a greater level of professionalism than that which now characterizes the industry.

When asked about the new knowledge, skills, and abilities employees in the Minnesota tourism industry will need to possess, given the identified external changes, most respondents again highlighted increased employee technological skills along with the knowledge and ability to work with people from diverse cultures who may not speak English as their first language. Perhaps in response to the economic changes predicted, a need for employees to understand business, marketing, and finance was also frequently mentioned. The importance of strong customer service skills was specifically mentioned by more than a third of respondents. The ability to adapt to a rapidly changing environment, which is likely to describe the tourism industry of the future, was also seen as a key attribute needed of the 2020 workforce. An interesting observation was made by one respondent who correctly noted that tourism has a strong history of employing persons with disabilities. They noted that this is something for the industry to be proud of and something that should be retained in the face of predicted externally driven change.

The responses to the question of the best way to ensure that employees in Minnesota's tourism industry do possess the new knowledge, skills, and abilities tended to focus on formal education and training. While the majority of this skill acquisition focused on post-secondary education and workplace learning a great emphasis was also placed on K-12 education. One executive director suggested that a second language should be mandatory in schools. This partnership approach between industry and education was seen as a vital factor in creating awareness of tourism related occupations and making tourism an industry of choice.

A series of 11 potential barriers for HRD in Minnesota's tourism industry were presented to respondents. The priority of other issues overshadowing HRD was identified as the single greatest barrier towards developing human resources. The other most significant barriers for HRD reported, in order, were high personnel turnover, lack of time, cost of training and developing employees, and benefits of HRD not known. The final section of the survey examined who should have responsibility for ensuring that the tourism workforce in Minnesota in 2020 has the required skills, knowledge, and abilities. Based on the responses from the executive directors, the majority agreed that persons at managerial levels within the tourism sector, such as the owners/managers and supervisors in the industry are the most responsible. The other most important individuals for ensuring that the future workforce has the necessary skills were policy makers, college/university faculty, and high school teachers. The respondents then next in order identified the employees themselves as being responsible for gaining the required skill sets to function effectively in the 2020 workforce. Interestingly, this suggests that respondents feel employees are not as responsible as owners/managers, supervisors and college/university faculty for ensuring workers are ready for jobs in the future.

Results from the Labor Market Analysis

Data related to labor market analysis suggest that factors associated with population are the single most important feature for determining the size and composition of the labor force. Population trends affect employment in a number of ways including the demand for goods and services and the corresponding changes in the size and demographic composition of the labor force (Hecker, 2001). The U.S. Census Bureau projected that the U.S. population should increase by 24 million over the 2002-2012 period, a slower rate of growth than over the previous 10-year period. The population aged 16 to 24 will grow at 7 percent between 2002 and 2012, whereas, the group of people aged 55 to 64 will increase by 43.6 percent or 11.5 million persons. Looking further out, the Census Bureau is projecting that in 2020 U.S. population will have reached 325 million. The *Workforce 2020* study (Judy & D'Amico, 1997) also projected significant population growth with the total size of the U.S. workforce in 2020 estimated at 171 million with significant higher proportions of women and immigrant workers. The number of workers staying in the workforce after traditional retirement age is forecast to increase as work offsets increased retirement expenses and lower Social Security income. At the state level, Minnesota's population is predicted to show steady growth. The State Demography Office has suggested that Minnesota's population is projected to grow to 5.45 million by 2010 and 6.27 million by 2030 (McMurray, 2002). This represents an 11% increase. This growth will be fueled by immigration from other states and foreign countries and by natural increase resulting from more births than deaths.

The BLS provides an employment outlook over a ten-year time horizon. The most recent data projections on the 2002-2012 decade are summarized into three broad categories: general U.S. economic outlook projections, labor force projections, and occupational projections. The expected outlook for the U.S. economy is anticipated to show domestic growth with continued high productivity, low unemployment rates, and strong foreign markets (Su, 2001). Labor force projections are made by combining projections of the general population from U.S. Census data and labor force participation projections made by the BLS. Projections for 2012 are characterized by overall growth of the size of the labor force with 17.4 million additional workers anticipated to be added over the 2002-2012 period (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004). Looking beyond the 2002-2012 period there are estimates that by 2020 the U.S. economy will require a total of 144.7 million workers. Of this total number of workers, approximately 83% will work in service industries. Finally, the BLS analysis of occupational employment projections to 2012 shows that jobs requiring a postsecondary vocational award or an academic degree, which

accounted for 29 percent of all jobs in 2000, will account for 42 percent of total job growth from 2002 to 2012. However, most of the new jobs added to the labor market will be in occupations that require only work-related training. This would include many jobs in the tourism sector.

When examining workforce projections in the tourism industry the first challenge confronted is the diversity by which the industry is defined and the resulting range of tourism related occupations either included or excluded in labor market analysis data. As the International Labour Organization (ILO) (2001, p.7) noted:

> the credibility and international comparability of "tourism statistics" depend heavily on: (1) a consensus regarding the choice of "tourism characteristic industries", i.e. those industries on which tourism demand has the most important direct impact, and an estimation of the "tourism ratio" of their output; as well as (2) the methods used to calculate the indirect effects on the output of many other industries. Statistical presentations differ in whether they include such indirect or induced effects in the measurement of tourism in the economy.

Despite these challenges facing human resource planners there is now widespread agreement about past and future employment growth in the tourism sector. By some accounts employment in the tourism industry has tripled since 1970 with an estimated 7,629 000 U.S. employees (full-time equivalent) working within the industry, representing 5.6% of total U.S. employment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2000). The BLS has predicted that overall employment in the broadly defined tourism, leisure, and hospitability industry will grow by 17.8 percent by 2012. No existing data extends beyond 2012, although double digit percentages increases are suggested to continue towards 2020 (U.S. Department of Labor: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2004).

Tourism is a key sector of Minnesota's economy, currently generating $9.2 billion annually (Hillman, 2004) and providing full-time employment for 226,293 people (DEED, 2005). The tourism industry is classified by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) as part of the leisure and hospitality industry which includes the eating and drinking, lodging, amusement, and recreation sectors as defined by the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system. Separating out the number of Minnesotan's employed within the tourism industry (leisure and hospitality industry) creates difficulty based on this definition and how labor market data is tracked within SIC categories. The current number represents approximately nine percent of all the jobs in Minnesota's economy – a percentage that has remained fairly consistent over the last decade. On the whole, tourism related jobs are found in a range of businesses that include everything from small, owner-managed resorts to national hotel chains. While a degree of uncertainty exists over the exact current size of the tourism workforce a clearer indication of future staffing needs is present in data projecting Minnesota industries likely to experience the greatest changes in terms of the numbers employed between the years 2002 to 2012. No data is available beyond 2012. The states traditional strong primary produce and extractive industrial sectors (mining, agriculture, forestry, and fishing) show either zero growth or actual job loss; whereas the leisure and hospitality industry is projected to be the fourth most rapidly growing sector in the state in terms of the number of new jobs created between 2002 and 2012. This growth projection represents a 19% change in the number of jobs across the ten year period. Put another way, this represents more than 46,000 new tourism related jobs ranging from entry level to senior executive that will need filling by 2012. In summary, the examination of existing data shows that while Minnesota's population will continue to grow at 11% creating job growth in all economic sectors, the tourism industry in Minnesota will experience almost 20% growth.

Discussion and Conclusions

The overall aim of this study was to gain information to create a preliminary profile of the tourism/hospitality employee and the tourism workforce in Minnesota in the year 2020 while comparing the results of two methods for conducting workforce planning. The most important conclusion that can be drawn from the secondary data analysis and interviews with key leaders is that the tourism industry in Minnesota lags behind many other industry sectors in collecting data needed to forecast long-term workforce changes. In other occupations experiencing projected employee shortages in the face of significant external environmental change there appears to be a greater amount of workplace planning occurring. Furthermore, within the tourism industry there appears to be ample evidence that other regions and nations are investing considerable resources into workforce planning despite the challenges that long range planning in this ill-defined industry presents. For example, discussion, frameworks, and examples of completed tourism workforce plans can be found in increasing numbers from diverse global locations including London, England (Euronet.org); and the Asia and the Pacific region (International Labour Organization , 2003).

When comparing results from the external environmental scan and labor market analysis data a fairly high level of consensus was found on the likely economic, demographic, political/legislative, and technology impacts to both the tourism industry and its 2020 workforce. However, the interviews with executive directors produced far more specific information than labor market sources in terms of the human resource management and development

actions needed in response to externally driven changes. Furthermore, interviews with industry leaders identified potential major barriers to the development of human resources in the industry, an issue not addressed in any existing labor market data sources. Finally, industry leaders, and not labor market information, seem able to recognize where responsibility rests for ensuring that the future workforce is sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled. Respondents to the environmental scan were firmly in the belief that this responsibility would mostly fall on individual tourism organization managers and supervisors, but also educators, especially those in the post-secondary level, would also play a major role in delivering qualified human resources into the tourism labor market.

The results of this study indicate that a combined method approach to HRD planning may be better than selecting either an external environmental scanning or a labor market analysis approach alone. While fraught with difficulties and limitations, forecasting models for tourism related and tourism generated employment need further development (Sirakaya, Choi, & Var, 2002; Smeral, 2003). Researchers from HRD, economics, education, and management along with human resource management and HRD practitioners from industry should play a key role in the evolution and refinement of workforce planning models and forecasting techniques. The importance of tourism to the economic vitality of regions, states, and nations, should encourage government and foundations to fund grant-sponsored research in this area where the outcome is likely to assist both individual organizations and the industry as a whole. Future research would also benefit from studies examining scanning methods and labor market analysis techniques compared to alternative approaches to projecting issues related to the future workforce such as scenario planning. This would seem to be well-supported with existing theory in that scenario planning aims to achieve interactive forecasting by using strategic intelligence from the economic, political, environmental, cultural, and technological domains along with consideration of past trends, future bearing events, the role of main actors, and critical uncertainties of the social system (Ruona, Lynham, & Chermack, 2003). Scenarios ensure that plans avoid sub-optimal development paths by exposing negative events that might happen in the future and preparing in advance how to take care of these. Given what is known and what is unknown about the future of the tourism workforce this planning method may be well suited when combined with labor market data and existing HRD planning frameworks.

The limitations of this study need to be recognized when considering the findings. The primary limitations are related to the study setting in a single U.S. state and the small sample size of executive directors. However, we feel any potential bias maybe minimal given the total population of these positions, the open-ended qualitative approach to scanning used in the study, and the need for individuals in this role to be extremely knowledgeable about external environmental trends and their potential impact to their industry. The unknown accuracy of as-reported labor market analysis data is an additional limitation. In the present era of external environmental change within the tourism workforce two things are clear: the old rules regarding recruiting, retaining, and training employees no longer work, and no one is certain what the new rules will be. Yet, numerous quotes support the need to envision then plan for the future. "The future is not inevitable. We can influence it, if we know what we want it to be" (Handy, 1989).

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