

Weaving Paths in Adventure Therapy  
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## Innovation through Adhocracy: WAT Future?

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## Abstract

The following paper looks at trends to help predict the future five years of wilderness / adventure therapy (WAT) programs in the South Pacific. Crystal ball gazing is not at present commonly discussed in WAT literature. As a trend in new professions, alternative perspectives tend to be imported to make up for the lack of longitudinally developed thought. To assist in mapping the future both organisationally and programmatically, the trends for this paper are therefore derived from largely outside this field of expertise. The model is then used as a template to develop a strategic response within an established organisation.

## Predictions to 2006 WAT Organisations

### Corporate Governance and Human Resource Influences

History provides a map for the future. Mintzberg (1989) claims that in order to predict the future we need to consider our cognitive maps. In one of life's interesting ironies, he notes that it is human nature to live life with a forward focus but through lens of the past. The implication this has for WAT programs is that when crafting future strategies we will construct pathways through our understanding of our past experience. The growth of WAT programs has largely developed through experiential education, in particular through the writings and philosophies of John Dewey, Kurt Hahn and William James. Thematically, there has been a sense of positivity in the lessons learnt from past mistakes, and wisdom and tradition that comes from the comparison between today and yesteryear (Kraft &

Sakofs, 1992).

Latemore and Callan (1998) also note that leaders stand on the platform of their predecessors. After extensive analysis of adolescent programs, Sveen (1995) adapted Walter and Marks (1981) general eclectic model of human functioning to produce a detailed eclectic model of wilderness-based program intervention for at-risk populations . The eclectic model is comprised of five broad theoretical perspectives, and although many other variant theories exist under the label of each perspective, Sveens review concentrated on theories that had gained the most empirical support in the literature. The theoretical perspectives are outlined below...

ß *Context theories:* risk is the result of socio-economic and cultural pressures of the society being exerted on the individual and social institutions (eg. family, school, peers, media). Themes revolve around concepts of anomie, alienation, labelling, marginalisation, and deviant subcultures.

ß *Conflict Theories:* risk is based on past and present unresolved unconscious drives/issues that emerge during discrete stages of the life cycle.

ß *Learning Theories:* risk results from the undesirable reinforcement of behaviour and is concerned with the principles of Classical Conditioning, Operant Conditioning and Modelling.

ß *Fulfilment Theories:* risk is a symptom of a lack of basic needs required for human growth and independence. It is often concerned with helping individuals to reach a stage for optimal growth to occur (eg. a self actualising state).

ß *Cognitive Theories:* risk is a result of deficits in intellectual, emotional, and spiritual processing leading in a reduced capacity to problem solve and generate strategies in order to adapt in the environment.

Sveen (1995) used the eclectic model of wilderness intervention as a scaffold to investigate the efficacy of Project Hahn wilderness program. He did this by choosing measures based on various theoretical constructs of the eclectic model.

#### Innovation through Adhocracy

Mintzberg (1989) discusses the concept of an organisational adhocracy where the agency produces custom made services in an innovative way on a project basis. Patrickson and Hartmann (2001) note the future-dominant strategy for not-for-profit Australasian service agencies lies in seeking markets abroad, with an Asian bias. Intellectual capital will be commodity replacing current financial resource orientation. Innovation through organisation mission and goals will be the corporate drivers, instead of internal rules and duty statements. Individual task specialisations will give way to teamwork in holistic organisations.

Greater accountability pressures are a factor being felt throughout the mainstream of all of the western economies. To maintain a competitive edge, Takeuchi (1998) argues cost cutting and downsizing in the Western world runs counter to organisations need for developing creativity and innovation. The key to this process is employees sense of personal commitment to the enterprise and its mission (Nonaka, 1991; cited in Harris & Volet, 1997).

## Career Turnover

Parker and Inkson (1999, p.78) discuss the phrase boundaryless career behaviour as the prototype for this new millennium. This is where interdependent opportunities for personal development occur across organisational boundaries, and a shift of focus occurs from long-term to short-term employer commitment. Traditional career maps will disappear with career mobility viewed opportunistically. Paradoxically, loyalty will be encouraged through supporting mobility while providing internal development. The authors argue that opportunities made available for personal growth will counteract staff mobility.

There seems to be commonalities across the above literature that change management and globalisation will provide the greatest organisational challenges, particularly due to the feelings of vulnerability created from reactive policies and subsequent loss of control.

## Encourage a Meaningful and Integrated Career-Self

A post-materialist era is dawning where a search for personal meaning, quality of life, and self-development will become the emerging value. Guevara and Ord (1996) predict a blurring of work and home boundaries,

and new environs for creating meaning in our lives. They discuss three central themes: presence and belonging, relationship, and contribution. Presence and belonging relate to issues of personal identity tied to an organisation / location. Relationship is concerned with connectedness and where we stand in relation to others, in order to build shared meanings. Contribution determines perceived value and relevance to others. They also note the role of shared values and beliefs that enable individuals to create shared meanings where they can place themselves within a work context. The authors assert that there will be a need to regularly re-experience the core of the organisational community.

A number of authors (Patrickson & Hartmann, 2001; Chiavenato, 2001; Guevara & Ord, 1996, Mellors, 1996) view the future of the South Pacific workforce as more ethnically diverse, and a greater representation of women. Part-time and remote area work will replace full-time centralised employment. Business partnerships with employees will philosophically alter the current approach to human resources. Democratic leadership will replace authoritarian structures, and flexibility rather than stability will become the organisational status quo (Chiavenato, 2001).

From an HR perspective Cavell and Associates (1995) have factored in a shift toward family-friendly work-place practises that meet organisational and individual needs. The latter projection they predict will have an impact on intra-family relationships. Drucker (1998) believes HR

challenges will be critical in the areas of developing rewards and recognition, obtaining a shared vision, training to create quality staff and management structural change towards work-based teams. He also reiterates the need for life-long learning.

In a case study analysis of successful organisations, Collins (2001) discusses the need to build a culture of discipline and life-long learning. He notes the importance of leadership at the helm, through the yin and yang attributes of humility and fierce professional resolve. Humility means channelling ambition into the organisation not the self, and apportioning success to the people of the organisation while accepting responsibility when things go awry. Resolve equates to an unwavering focus to produce the best long-term results regardless of the degree of challenge. Latemore and Callan (1998) agree with Collins that leaders need to avoid the adulation of their peers but also add the need to distribute decision-making power to all levels and possess a people orientation. This approach is necessary for the personal development of staff with the aim of helping them transform as healthier, wiser and more autonomous individuals.

### Build Communities Rather than Fortresses

Situational prevention is a boom industry and includes video surveillance in shopping malls, neighbourhood, business and bush watch, and private security firms. What is lacking is the balance that can be achieved through

confronting this social dysfunction at the source. Without intervention at the personal level, the Australian community will continue evolving into this fortress mentality (Potas, Vining & Wilson, 1990).

McKnight (2001) compares the differences between communities and the systems that operate within them. He defines systems or structures as mechanisms to ensure uniformity where a few people control a lot of people. The community on the other hand, is not controlled and produces care. Systems he argues produce services, while communities produce care. Services keep people at a client level whereas communities build citizenry. He states our goal is to build communities not systems, and to work to help the community use the systems to support rather than alienate the community. Hollis (1998) concurs with McKnight enforcing a similar paradigm that our goal is to build communities from societies. He defines societies as gatherings without heart, and institutions as fragile societies with little grounding in transcendent values. Community building he states requires lifting individuals out of their isolation through participating in a common transcendent experience. A community requires a culture that permits honest and constructive feedback for individual growth (Peck, 1987). Conflicting psychological types will inevitably cause group conflict. This conflict should be seen as an opportunity for community growth through building a safe environment for diversity to flourish (Frankl, 1967).

As Hollis (1998) notes, the managers willingness to address personal healing is essential before being able to contribute to the well being of the collective. If the manger is stuck psychologically so too will be the organisation.

Ongoing personal development and career training simultaneously exists in a learning organisation. Staffs training programs are focused specifically on the immediate workplace environment but also act as a catalyst for ongoing development (Harris & Volet, 1997).

#### Predictions to 2006 Programmatic Influences

The recent 2001 South Pacific WAT forum in Victoria noted an increased need to value of mystery, spiritualism and eco-sustainability in our practices. This included a wider acceptance of indigenous cultural ideas. There was also discussion regarding the wider community acceptance of natural healing and a move away from the medical model. King (2000, p.9) notes that sustainability is the key strategic imperative of the future. The triple bottom line doctrine adds social and environmental aspects to the economic determinant of successful practice. The provision of services needs to be environmentally sustainable, socially responsible and economically viable. Priest and Gass (1997) when considering the future of outdoor leadership claim the following pessimistic trends will be evident. They predict that society will become more consumptive, dominant and less compassionate. The need for wilderness experiences will grow in an

effort to address social problems. Litigation and restrictive insurance processes will prevail determining the type of adventure programming, making operations more regulated and complex. Wilderness will become less wild and remote. While advances in safety technology will undermine programming with participants learning to rely on technology instead of themselves. All of these above factors will continue to exacerbate an unacceptably high level of staff burnout.

#### Program Accreditation Quality Assurance

There is presently a dearth of empirical data in professional training, and this has negative implications, as it is practice to build programs from experientially developed theory. The overall difficulty in wilderness therapy facilitation as elaborated by Ringer (1994), is that no one has been able to agree to the necessary facilitator competencies that are appropriate for all settings, activities, professional interests and goals. He concludes that while such diversity remains, there is no possibility of gaining common agreement on a definitive set of competencies. This is one reason why program accreditation is more common than attaining quality assurance across the industry.

#### Projected PH Trends

##### Introduction

Project Hahn (PH) is a not-for-profit Public Benevolent Institution (PBI), which has been incorporated since 1983. PH currently operates within a

strategic alliance with the Government of Tasmania through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 1999-2006. This document has provided a framework for the community-based PH to become an integral aspect of a Tasmanian government-supported social-justice bottom-line. A partnership between the public and the private not-for-profit sector provides a balance of community ownership and public finance. Within the MOU, staffing is financed and sourced through the State Government, while the incorporated body holds the intellectual property. The operational model uses a statewide network of referral agencies and community partnerships as an adjunctive mechanism to attract participants and address their needs. The project in 2002 is in a period of relative stability and equates to fifty programs each year for four hundred participants.

PH is preparing for two broad organisational changes for post MOU 2006 and beyond. The first is an interstate export process and the second adopts recently agreed broad community values into existing programming.

As a consequence of rising costs, full funding after 2006 may not be easily negotiated. As a consequence, PH needs to have in place alternative funding sources. The PH Board and the Premier of Tasmania have achieved consensus that now is the time to investigate export expansion interstate and overseas. The purpose of this growth prior to the end of the MOU will be to establish a wider base of operation as enshrined in the PH

PBI objectives, but also to partially fund future operations into perpetuity. Implementing quality assurance standards and/or program accreditation processes are the immediate priorities, with the eventual aim to market training to mainland industry workers and then franchise new agencies (See Appendix 1).

The second major priority for the future is for PH to continue as a cutting-edge, vibrant, community-based organisation. This means meeting the needs of PBI targeted populations through the constant improvement of our heterogeneous and specialist program models. Fortuitously, a series of Tasmania *Together* (TT) state-wide community forums were held in 2000, where a broad representation of peoples views were sought to vision Tasmania through to 2020. The second area of future projection emanates from the benchmarks of these forums. While continuing to pursue best practice processes (CultureShift, 1998), the PH Board has also made a commitment to the TT thematic goals and benchmarks, as a part of this agency's push for community-based relevance (See Appendix II).

Middle management at PH is composed of two members of staff. The Program Leaders primary focus is on staffing and staff training, while the Program Manager has accountability for all aspects of the program. Middle management skills at PH may be best described through the metaphor of a highly skilled circus entertainer. Not only does the role require the agility

of a tight ropewalker but also the dexterity of flame throwing juggler. Strategies for longevity in this potentially dangerous circus only comes through regular self-appraisal, life-long learning and ongoing reflection of emotional, spiritual and physical needs. Middle management need to remember that being liked by everyone is unattainable and irrational (Ellis, 1995). People skills require an emotionally intelligent connection through policies of inclusion for staff, referral agents, board members and political masters.

The PH Board possess foundational knowledge of the history of the program and is made up of professional people with skills in counselling, and a background in referral networks and marketing. A most important role they play from an organisational perspective is to provide an open door to the Tasmanian Premier and Cabinet. This corporate governance, as well as the ability to sell the positive message of the programs success has proven key to the programs longevity. PH with MOU II coming to an end in 2006, will be in the position to renegotiate its partnership with the Tasmanian Government. This may take the form of a business partnership agreement and include an internal customer charter.

The PH administrative team is made up of four full-time staff, each of whom learn the role through a traineeship mentoring process. They have the delegated authority of organising participants through the referral process onto courses, and preparing equipment for programs. This team

is currently made up of a diverse group of individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds, different ages, a mix of native languages, and gender. This provides a strategic collective balance in problem-solving and cross-cultural participant recruitment.

Field-staff facilitators are largely made up of emotionally mature people with an average age of forty years (Goleman, 1998), from a broad range of backgrounds, cultures and life experiences. PH teams in the field are assembled based on a balance of gender, age and collective strengths in hard and soft skill competencies (Priest and Gass, 1997). Funding to attain independent program accreditation is being sought at PH for 2002.

### Conclusion

In adapting to the predictions of a wide number of organisational authors, the following strategies have been ascertained for export and organisational relevance. Adhocracy will provide the competitive edge. A client focus through a strategic alliance of community and government will continue to provide an ideal mix to achieve a societal bottom-line. Contractual self-managing teams will continue to be the operational medium of service.

Personal and career growth remains core business within the PH ethos. Program specific competencies and accreditation the likely path to pursue within the wilderness therapy industry. Finally, a people orientation first

and foremost will help bind the necessary relationships across all quarters to keep the energy levels high and the outcomes on the board.

This parallels the client focus competitive edge of PH. Each program is innovative as it adapts to the needs of each of the participants, rather than applying a blanket approach to the population. Field teams are composed of twenty-five casual facilitators with the highly responsible delegation of counselling authority to participants on programs. PH currently employs field staff through contractual agreements and has a workforce that seeks the boundaryless flexibility of this lifestyle. The export of training will be conducted through the existing model of self-managing work-based teams, with an emphasis on staff professionalism and training, independence and sound judgement.

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## Appendix I

To achieve the expansion goal within a not-for-profit PBI framework, PH enrolled in a three-month commercialisation-ready program (September 2001). Initially it has been recommended the organisation assess market readiness through attaining quality assurance/accreditation and intellectual property, confirming proof of concept, product and market (Pyksis, 2001). Also, the organisation will need to assess growth potential by researching targeted markets, keeping in mind the programs competitive difference and the PH board members goals. Identified gaps in change readiness include quality assurance and trademarks, and a targeted service marketing plan tied to an understanding of national and international customer key buying reasons.

## Appendix II

### Tasmania Together Goals and Benchmarks: PH Areas to Address

#### **Our Community:**

**Goal 1.** Ensure all Tasmanians have a reasonable standard of living with regard to food, shelter, transport, justice, education, communication, health and community services.

Σ Reduce the number of long-term unemployed to the level of the national average by 2005, and to have the lowest level in Australia by 2010.

**Goal 2.** To have a community where people feel safe and are safe in all aspects of their lives.

Σ Halve the rate of crime by 2020.

Σ Reduce the proportion of first offenders that re-offend.

**Goal 3.** Recognise and value the many contributions that volunteers and unpaid workers can-and do-make to their community.

Σ Increase by more than one-third voluntary participation in community and service activities by 2020.

**Goal 4.** Create a culture that encourages people to learn and develop new skills, including life skills throughout their lives.

Σ Increase the proportion of people in full or part-time training to the level of the national average by 2010, and to the level of the best performing state by 2020.

Σ Increase the proportion of people aged 20-24 in full-time or part-time education or training to the national average by 2015.

**Goal 5.** Develop an approach to health and wellbeing that focuses on preventing poor health and encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Σ More than double the percentage of people who do medium or high-intensity exercise by 2020.

Σ Increase the proportion of Tasmanians who feel part of the community.

Σ Increase the level of acceptance and understanding of mental health in the community.

Σ Reduce by two-thirds the rate of smoking by 2020.

**Goal 7.** Foster and value vibrant and diverse rural, regional and remote communities that are connected to each other and the rest of the world.

Σ To consistently improve our quality of life.

Σ Establish a Social Capital Index to measure the vibrancy of rural and regional communities.

**Goal 8.** Provide a valued role in community life for Tasmanians young people now and in the future.

Σ Increase participation of young people in community groups.

**Goal 9.** Foster an inclusive society that acknowledges and respects our multicultural heritage, values diversity and treats everyone with

compassion and respect.

- Σ Double the number of state wide cultural events by 2020.
- Σ Measure awareness of, and attitudes towards, civil rights.

#### Our Culture:

**Goal 10.** Acknowledge and respect the contributions that the Aboriginal community and its culture have made and continue to make to Tasmania and its identity.

- Σ Increase the number of people who have completed Aboriginal culture awareness programs.
- Σ Increase the number of Aboriginal people practising cultural activities including hunting, fishing and gathering.

**Goal 11.** Have Tasmanians recognised nationally and internationally for its innovation, pursuit of excellence and creativity in arts and culture.

- Σ Increase by more than 50% the participation rate in cultural activities
- Σ People who are actually involved in activities, not just audiences.

#### Our Democracy:

**Goal 12.** Provide all Tasmanians with the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

- Σ Increase the proportion of Commonwealth, State and Local Government assistance dedicated to locally driven community programs/projects.

**Goal 13.** Have a system of government that is open, seeks and listens to peoples views and ideas, and uses them in decision-making levels.

Σ Increase political awareness within the community.

Σ Improve levels of satisfaction with the comprehensiveness of information, levels of confidence in being able to deal with authorities.

**Goal 15.** Have a system of government that is accountable to the people and plans for the future at all levels.

Σ Ensure all state agencies and councils have long-term strategic planning processes in place by 2005.

#### **Our Economy:**

**Goal 16.** Increase job and meaningful work opportunities in Tasmania.

Σ Eliminate under-employment by 2020 as this has social and economic implications for individuals and the broader community.

Σ To provide jobs for disadvantaged people, especially the long-term unemployed.

Σ Improve the level of commercialisation of university and other research institute projects.

**Goal 17.** Maximise the opportunities available through information and other technologies.

Σ Improve broadband telecommunications capacity to maximise opportunities for businesses and individuals in all regions of Tasmania.

**Goal 18.** Increase the number of and participation in accredited post-

compulsory courses with learning content that fosters innovative and creative thought.

Our Environment:

**Goal 21.** Value, protect and conserve our natural and cultural heritage.

Σ Increase by more than 25% attendance at major cultural heritage sites by 2020.

**Goal 23.** Ensure there is a balance between environmental protection and economic and social development.

Σ Increase the number of businesses, agencies and Government Business Enterprise certified against environmental, occupational health and safety, and quality assurance standards.

Σ Ensure no new pests are established in Tasmania within the next 20 years.

**Goal 24.** Ensure our natural resources are managed in a sustainable way now and for the future generations.

Σ Reduce by more than half the number of deaths resulting from melanoma by 2020.

Σ Reduce the impact of recreation on the natural environment.  
Increased Contractual Agreements.

King (1998) predicts that this will occur through a more highly contractual environment in the future. He predicts a continued severance of the strategy and service delivery areas, and a subsequent proliferation of

service agreements to substantiate performance standards and funding levels. Through benchmarking against the private sector, not for profit services will be under pressure to reduce costs while still delivering effective programs. Zanetti (1998) like King, moves us further along the separation of the purchaser from the provider through the building of genuine partnerships between governments and private organisations. She predicts the need for the leaders to utilise their skills to become the prime business motivators in developing a relationship with all three tiers of government. O'Neill and Hughes (1998) believe the public service of the future will continue to operate in a similar path to the private sector, where flexibility and displacement of tenure will be the norm through contract employment agreements. Other private oriented future projections for the public service include the push towards consultancies (Wilson, 1996), with greater future uncertainty (Ashkenas, Ulrich, Jick & Kerr. 1998) and the increased need for sound judgement (DeLacy, 1999).