

## **TOWARDS A PROCESS MODEL OF INDUCTION AND TRAINING FOR YOUNG EVENT VOLUNTEERS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Volunteer workforces at events are becoming relentlessly younger; however, this workforce arguably demands a more nuanced management approach. The limited duration of events typically makes the induction and training of volunteers challenging for event managers. Despite the increasing popularity of volunteering, particularly among young people, and the increasing demand for volunteer labour at events, little research exists on human resource management issues pertaining to young volunteers at events. This study examined induction and training of young, short-term volunteers at the Northern University Games (NUG) held in Australia. Through a qualitative case study approach data indicated that NUG volunteers received mostly ad-hoc, on-the-job training, and interviewees indicated a preference for demonstration based training coupled with hands on practice prior to the event. A descriptive model was derived from the data, reflecting young volunteers' preferences for training and induction. The purpose of this paper is to propose this model and discuss its implications, along with avenues for future research.

### **KEY WORDS**

Human resource development, Volunteers, Generation Y

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Human resources are becoming increasingly important as a means of achieving business success (Collins, 2002). Concomitantly, there is significant growth within the events sector, which has been observed as being heavily reliant on volunteer human resources (O'Neill, Getz, & Carlsen, 1999). As volunteers are generally an important labour source for events, event managers require specific skills to develop volunteer workforces (Wendroff, 2004). Furthermore, volunteering at special events is becoming increasingly popular (Lockstone & Smith, 2009), and large proportions of contemporary volunteer workforces are made up of young people (Eisner, 2005). With young workforces that are diverse and ever-changing, effective and efficient human resource management (HRM) is essential in facilitating successful events. To date there is a lack of research regarding training and induction of volunteers in special events. Indeed, because of the degree to which events rely on volunteer labour this area is in need of further study, and this body of knowledge can be further developed by placing emphasis on volunteerism and its importance to the delivery of special events (Baum & Lockstone, 2007). Consequently, an

understanding of induction and training processes that are effective for young volunteers is essential to event management research.

Using the Northern University Games (NUG) (held in Northern New South Wales, Australia) as a case study, the research presented in this paper was conducted as part of a broader study into young, short-term volunteers' preferences for being inducted into event organisations and being trained for volunteer roles at a sporting event. An overarching aim of this paper is to propose a descriptive model of young volunteers' preferences regarding training and induction at events, and to identify a range of future research avenues regarding this area. This study is significant because the role of human resources in events, particularly young volunteers, is crucial in effectively managing volunteers, yet is an area that has attracted little attention from scholars to date. This study therefore contributes towards a greater understanding of HRM issues pertinent to a cohort of volunteers that are becoming increasingly prevalent at contemporary events.

Initially, a literature review is presented addressing human resource development (HRD) as a broad concept, induction and training as HRD processes, management of volunteers within events, and young people as volunteers in today's competitive environment. An overview of the study's context, the NUG, is then provided, followed by a description of the methodological procedures adopted to collect and analyse data relevant to this paper's findings. Before presenting the study's findings, the sample is described. The paper then proceeds to propose a process model of training and induction for young event volunteers using a combined discussion of empirical results and literature. Lastly, a conclusion, implications of the research and suggestions for further research close the paper.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Human Resource Development

HRD is a broader consideration in organisations, incorporating the processes of induction and training – key concepts within the present study. HRD is a concept representing the latest evolutionary stage in the field of training, developing and educating people with organisations' objectives in mind (Wilson, 2005). HRD is complex and lacks a universal definition; however, for the purposes of this study HRD is defined as, "... a set of systematic and planned activities designed by an organisation to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet current and future job demands" (Werner & DeSimone, 2012, p. 4). HRD encompasses processes to train human resources in order to provide quality customer service that is essential in today's business environment (Stone, 2010). As the contemporary event market is constantly changing, it is imperative that HRD be adaptable and effectively contribute towards managing change (Simmonds & Pederson, 2006). HRD is also concerned with managing the skills and knowledge of a diverse and sophisticated workforce, a valuable asset in today's continually changing environment (Delahaye, 2005).

According to Delahaye (2005) there are four stages of HRD: investigation, design, implementation and evaluation. The first stage, investigation, involves the underpinning theories, principles and approaches that describe our understanding of how adults learn (Delahaye, 2005). In the second stage, the design of specific roles for employees which align with their personal values creates a more enriching driver for employee motivation. Delivery is concerned with approaches to learning, for example lectures, demonstrations and on-the-job training (OJT). The final phase

stems from a compulsion to understand and improve oneself, for example through an employee evaluation. Similarly, Wilson (2005) proposed the identification, planning and designing, delivery, and assessment/evaluation stages. This signifies that there is some consensus across the literature regarding these sequential stages. Individual stages are reciprocated within induction and training phases, further solidifying uniformity of this concept across training and development models.

#### **Induction and Training as Human Resource Development Processes**

Induction is said to be one of the most neglected functions in many organisations (Brown, 2007). The success of any business however, depends heavily on effective induction of new employees (Davis & Kleiner, 2001). The aim of induction, and subsequently training, is to make new employees as productive as possible, in the shortest time period possible, to acquaint them with an organisation effectively (Sanders & Kleiner, 2002). Induction is often pushed aside in preference of training, though Salas and Cannon-Bowers (2001) have observed that events occurring before training are often as important, if not more important, than the training itself. Induction and training are conceptually and procedurally distinct, as induction typically occurs upon entry to the organisation, with a focus on context performance (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). Indeed, training and induction are often mistakenly perceived as interchangeable (Wanous & Reichers, 2000). The distinct difference between these two concepts is that training usually focuses on the 'what' and the 'how' of a job, while induction also focuses on the 'why' (Robbins, 2002). Advantages of successful induction programs across the literature emphasise a reduction in employee turnover, lower training costs, a reduction in new employee stress, a quicker progression of learning and productivity, and a greater connection to an organisation's culture and objectives (Lashley & Best, 2002; Sanders & Kleiner, 2002).

The definition of induction is somewhat consistent across the literature (Lashley & Best, 2002; Sprogoe & Elkjaer, 2010). Delahaye (2005) defines induction as "the process of introducing successful candidates to an organisation, through procedural and technical training as well as socialising them to an organisation's culture" (p. 22). Induction is responsible for imparting organisation- and role-specific information, and sets the tone for how rapidly a new employee can integrate and contribute to their new surroundings (Sanders & Kleiner, 2002). According to Edwards (2012) there are three aspects of an induction program: cause orientation, system orientation and social orientation. Cause orientation is concerned with educating a newcomer about the history of the organisation, and is a stage where the new employee can form an emotional connection to the organisation and its purpose. System orientation imparts procedural information required by a new employee and is the stage where role-specific tasks are learned. Finally, social orientation supports newcomers' understanding of the organisational culture, where the newcomer is welcomed, introduced to colleagues and made to feel comfortable.

Meanwhile, Meighan (1995) states that "training should be an integral part of the operation of any successful organisation" (p. 25). Contemporary business environments are fiercely competitive and dynamic, placing much higher expectations on employees in terms of performance and effectiveness than ever before (Palmer, 2005). As such, research can only improve and benefit individuals and organisations by updating training material and content. For the purposes of this study, Buckley and Caple's (2009) definition of training is adopted. This

definition was deemed most appropriate as their definition addresses 'what' training is, and 'why' it is necessary:

A planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge/skill/attitude through learning experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to enable an individual to acquire abilities in order that he or she can perform adequately a given task or job and realise their potential. (p. 9)

Training deals with the current situation and is often short-term, covering specific skills. As an integral part of HRD, and similar to induction, the systematic approach to training often includes four stages: identifying needs, planning, delivery and evaluation (Santos & Stuart, 2003). Effective training plans centre on four main principles: (a) they should present relevant information to be learned; (b) they should present the knowledge, skills and abilities that need to be learned; (c) there should be opportunities to practice these learned skills; and (d) employees should receive feedback throughout the process (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Indeed, the notion of feedback is advocated by Stone (2010) who argues training is most effective when preceded by a comprehensive evaluation.

It is often noted that the overarching purpose of training is to prepare an individual to perform a specific task more effectively (Buckley & Caple, 2009). But more often it is forgotten that it has a resounding impact on the organisation, where training can contribute to an organisation achieving its strategic objectives (Buckley & Caple, 2009). Research conducted by Santos and Stuart (2003) revealed training has many benefits such as increased confidence and self-efficacy, improved competencies and skills, reassuring employees they are being invested in, and motivation of staff to further their own abilities, culminating in enhanced organisational performance. Training can also be ineffective if it is delivered ineffectively, leaving employees unable to function productively, leading to dissatisfied staff and higher turnover rates (Sanders & Kleiner, 2002).

#### **Managing young volunteer workforces at events**

Event management organisations typically rely on volunteer labour (Anderson, 2004), as they are considered one of the main pillars of special events (Goldblatt, 2008; Nassar & Talaat, 2009). Volunteering is typically characterised as unpaid work whereby an individual's time, skills and knowledge are given freely to benefit another person, group or organisation (Lockstone & Baum, 2009; Lynch & Smith, 2010; McCabe, White, & Obst, 2007). As event organisations are essentially service-oriented organisations, their human resources are a source of potential competitive advantage (Solnet & Hood, 2008). The time-bound nature of special events presents a challenge to managing volunteers compared to other forms of volunteering. Event volunteers require a different management approach as they tend to be short-term or one-off (Cuskelly & Auld, 2000). This issue of perishability is exacerbated in the context of event volunteers because induction and training needs to be delivered within limited time constraints (McCurley & Lynch, 2009).

O'Neill et al. (1999) note that volunteers at events are neither trained nor experienced. Nevertheless, management of these human resources is key to successful events (Nassar &

Talaat, 2009); hence the value of induction and training, among other human resource functions, in creating reliable frontline staff (Solnet, Hood, & Barron, 2008). Costa, Chalip, Green and Simes (2006) argue that the training of event volunteers is necessary in order to enhance the effectiveness of this workforce, and should also be seen as an opportunity to build a sense of community among volunteers, as well as increase their satisfaction and commitment.

Until recently, skills of volunteer labour forces remained largely informal, meaning volunteers learned on-the-job; however, the growth of training in this sector is giving volunteers new professional skills and qualifications (Oakley, 2011). In this changing environment, training is recognised as an important cornerstone for organisations looking for an 'edge' in the competitive marketplace (Kellock Hay, Beattie, Livingstone, & Munro, 2001). Training should serve as a means of support, helping to build skills, interest and confidence in event volunteers. Induction is useful to cover general information about all areas relevant to the event, whilst allowing the volunteers an opportunity to meet each other (Cuskelly & Auld, 2000). These two functions of HRD are therefore vital tools for event managers to provide in order to encourage, motivate, excite, orient, support, enable and up-skill their volunteers.

Lead-in periods of induction and training should be used as ways to inspire volunteers with positive expectations regarding their experience during the event (Ralston, Downward, & Lumsdon, 2004). Previous research suggests that induction programs are important in the initial anticipatory socialisation stage in developing a subsequent relationship with volunteers and positively influencing their motivations (Ralston et al., 2004). The imperative to maintain and upgrade the skills, knowledge and abilities of volunteers is an essential activity for many organisations (Smith, 2006).

Further, volunteers require training to understand the organisations with which they are working, and also the tasks to which they are assigned (Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, & Washburn, 2009). This is especially important for special event volunteers as they will be expected to have a thorough knowledge of the event destination, and without adequate training may confuse event participants. Benefits of training volunteers include: an increase in commitment and engagement, skills that enable them to contribute at a higher level, skills which can be transferable outside of their current role, confidence, knowledge, and competent volunteers (Maynard, 2007). These benefits serve both the volunteer and the event organisation, and are attributes of the integral nature of any training and induction programs (Maynard, 2007; Meighan, 1995). The extant event management literature offers little guidance regarding effective means of inducting and training volunteers at events, nor does the literature specifically address HRM issues pertaining to the new wave of young volunteers at events.

### **Young Volunteers**

Eisner (2005) and McCabe et al. (2007) argue that volunteer workforces are becoming relentlessly younger. Research conducted by Volunteering Australia (2007) suggests that, "more and more young people in Australia are becoming involved in volunteering" (p. 3). To date however, there is very little research pertaining to these younger volunteers, specifically in the context of HRD issues including training and induction. Consequently, this study aims to contribute towards filling this knowledge gap by examining young volunteers in the context of a case study event.

Encased within the broader cohort of 'young people' this study is concerned with Generation Y. It is acknowledged that there is disparity among academics as to the exact birth timeframes used to define Generation Y. For the purposes of this study, Generation Y are defined as those born between 1978 and 1994, as defined by Sheahan (2005). Tulgan and Martin (2001) suggest Generation Y is leading a new wave of volunteerism, where they epitomise confidence, thrive on flexibility, are independent and techno-savvy, and are highly ambitious. These expectations are commonly related to their management and are considerations in the training they receive. As noted by Solnet et al. (2008), managers of Generation Y employees must place continued importance on training.

Researchers have argued that managers should familiarise themselves with the latest generations entering the labour market in order to "save themselves some headaches" in regards to training these younger people (Eisner, 2005, p. 1). Further, studies have suggested that Generation Y employees will leave their job if they do not receive training to develop professionally (Martin, 2005; Sheahan, 2005). Thus, training should be seen as an effective way to engage and develop talent amongst Generation Y. Formalised training appeals to this generation, and as such they will show their gratitude through dedication when it is given (Cairncross & Bultjens, 2010). It is often noted throughout the literature that ongoing training and development is associated with job satisfaction for Generation Y (Eisner, 2005).

As human resources are becoming significantly important for organisations' competitive advantage, and growth within special events has increased, it is necessary to further understand processes contributing towards the efficacy of these resources. Further, taking into account the changing nature and increasing number of younger volunteers in event workforces it is necessary to examine current development strategies (Solnet & Hood, 2008). Thus, the design and delivery of induction and training processes are key to effectively managing volunteer workforces within events. This area of research has been under-researched; however, the ever-increasing importance of volunteers to events presents an opportunity to further knowledge in this field – hence the significance of the present study. This study is further significant because in focusing on induction and training it deviates from previous research into volunteerism and event management which has typically focused around three areas: the economic value of volunteers, the community and social value of volunteers, and benefits to the volunteer themselves generated through volunteering (Holmes, 2009).

#### **STUDY CONTEXT: THE NORTHERN UNIVERSITY GAMES**

This study used the NUG held in Lismore, NSW, in July 2012 as a case study. This special event served as an appropriate case study primarily because it facilitated access to a salient population. The NUG is the largest annual/periodic university sporting event in the Queensland (Qld) and Northern New South Wales (NSW) region (AUS, 2009). The NUG are administered by Australian University Sport (AUS), a not-for-profit organisation and the peak governing body of university sport in Australia (AUS, 2009). Volunteers are an integral part of AUS events and are defined as "a person who chooses to contribute their time, skill and experience to Australian University Sport without financial reward" (Spethman, 2012, p. 6). Danvers (2012) reported that the NUG rely heavily on volunteers for the smooth functioning of the five-day event.

The NUG were first held in 1991 and Lismore last hosted the event in 1995 (Danvers, 2012). Thus the event presented a unique opportunity to address a gap in the literature and study a special event in context. The event is held for student athletes from universities and TAFE colleges from Qld, Northern NSW and the Northern Territory (AUS, 2009). The event is marketed as an opportunity for students to compete against each other in a variety of sports, including: netball, basketball, lawn bowls and hockey. The 2012 NUG were held from 1–5 July, with over 1,000 athletes participating, requiring the support of volunteers to assist in a range of functional departments including, Sport (encompassing the sub-functions Results and Medicine), Administration, Operations, Media and Marketing, and Special Events (e.g. organisation of social events beyond the sporting competition itself).

## METHODS

### Research Design and Data Collection

Merriam (2009) advocates that research focused on understanding “the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people’s lives” (p. 1). This exploratory research falls into the interpretive social sciences paradigm as the researcher seeks to “understand the world as it is ... see the world as an emergent social process” (Mangan, Lalwani, & Gardner, 2004, p. 566). This paradigm “assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 13). Therefore an interpretive, qualitative methodology was employed in this study allowing the researcher to enter the field with an open mind (Funder, 2005). To gain a first-hand account of the phenomenon under study – volunteers – it was necessary to engage with this group, hence a case study approach was adopted. Creswell’s (2009) definition of a case study informed this study, where it is considered a qualitative strategy in which the researcher explores in-depth an event, bound by time and activity, while data is collected through a variety of procedures. A single case study was examined in order that the uniqueness of the group could be fully appreciated (Bouma & Ling, 2004).

### Sampling

Purposive sampling was used in which participants were selected according to predetermined characteristics (Brotherton, 2008; Dolores & Tongco, 2007). The sample was limited to young volunteers between the ages of 18 and 32 who were volunteering at the NUG, and who the researcher had an opportunity to speak with whilst still carrying out the duties of her own volunteer role. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews with volunteers from the NUG were conducted. Although, despite the researcher’s best efforts it is unlikely that saturation was reached, as new information emerged in each interview. Further, recruiting additional interviewees was not possible, with attempts to reach saturation point, such as follow-up emails post-event, being unsuccessful.

### Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were considered the most effective data collection method due to the depth of information that could be gathered through exploring the volunteers’ perceptions (Barriball & While, 1994; Rowley, 2012). Interviews were conducted face-to-face with NUG volunteers at a time convenient to them, usually in an informal setting at the Games’ headquarters or at other NUG competition venues. Interviews ranged between 10 and 30

minutes in duration and were conversation-like, allowing emergent themes to come through, generating data rich in description (Jennings, 2010). Interviews were recorded, listened to and subsequently transcribed verbatim into text, a method advocated by Rowley (2012). A list of interview questions guided the semi-structured interviews and lines of questioning included: "Did the training conform to your expectations?"; "Was the allocated training substantial?"; "Did the training allow you to undertake all responsibilities of your role?" Interviewees were also asked to complete a short questionnaire collecting demographic data along with details about the role volunteering plays in their lives.

A number of challenges emerged in the data collection stage however. Volunteers were often difficult to intercept at the event, meaning that some interviews were rushed, for example while volunteers were on timed meal breaks. It was also evident that training and induction were not issues the volunteers had previously given thought to until asked about these issues during their interview. Consequently, many found the topic difficult to talk about, particularly induction. It is therefore possible that these challenges may have affected the quality of data. Future studies should therefore endeavour to collect data away from the event environment, as this may enable interviewees to better focus on the issues at hand. Future researchers may also find it useful to provide interviewees with a list of likely questions in advance to allow reflection on their volunteering experience and consideration of the issues to be examined.

#### **Data Analysis**

Interview data were transcribed verbatim, and grounded theory processes of open, axial and selective coding were applied. The lead author read through the transcribed interviews with a highlighter and coded the data initially as the themes emerged according to four research issues. These issues were derived from the study's objectives and included: volunteers' descriptions of the training offered, volunteers' reactions to the training offered, methods of training preferred by young volunteers and their reactions to the induction offered. From here the researcher started to look more closely at the patterns emerging, a process known as axial coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). A table was created in a word processing document into which selected quotes were categorised according to emergent themes. This allowed connections to be made amongst the data and to view only relevant findings together. Finally, emergent themes were identified and compared to key pieces of literature. This final stage, selective coding, is where theories start to develop (Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006), and in this study the process model presented constitutes the main outcome of the selective coding process.

#### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness was strived for in all research processes of this study, as it was seen as essential to contribute knowledge to this field that is believable and trustworthy (Merriam, 2009). Data collected via semi-structured interviews offered the opportunity to explore volunteers' perceptions in-depth, seeking new insights into this under-researched topic (Altinay & Paraskevas, 2008). The iterative processes of data collection and analysis associated with case studies, grounded theory and qualitative research allows for theory development which is grounded in empirical evidence (Hartley, 2004). Grounded theory allowed findings to be identified with no preconceptions, ensuring that results were constantly compared in order to adequately summarise the data (Babbie, 2010). Thus, the trustworthiness of the study is partly due to the strength of the methodological approach taken. To further enhance



trustworthiness of the research the lead author attempted to follow up the findings from the data already gathered by facilitating an online focus group. The aim of the focus group was to flesh out more of the emergent themes identified through the interviews and gain feedback on the themes that arose. This attempt failed as emails to research participants regarding a potential focus group received no responses. As interviews presented a challenge in that many participants had not given much prior thought to the processes of induction and training they underwent, a focus group would have allowed volunteers a further opportunity to articulate their thoughts. Thus, although attempts were made to develop and verify the emergent themes, the research did not reach saturation point. This was partly due to the lack of interest from interviewees, caging the potential of this research.

The sample for this study was made up of 12 volunteers who each participated in a semi-structured interview and completed a brief questionnaire administered prior to the interview. To protect the anonymity of the participants they were each given a pseudonym. Table 1 is a summary of the demographics of each participant.

**Table 1**  
Demographic characteristics of young NUG volunteers interviewed in this study.

Name: (pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Previous Volunteering experience	Importance of volunteering at events	Employment status
Emily	Female	22	Yes	4	Full-time student
Ashley	Female	22	Yes	4	Full-time student
DeAnna	Female	21	Yes	4	Full-time student
Trista	Female	21	Yes	3	Full-time student
Meredith	Female	19	No	3	Full-time student
Jennifer	Female	18	Yes	3	Full-time student
Brad	Male	20	No	4	Full-time student
Ben	Male	26	Yes	4	Unemployed
Jillian	Female	18	No	3	Full-time student
Ali	Female	19	Yes	3	Full-time student
Jake	Male	18	Yes	3	Full-time student
Jason	Male	25	Yes	4	Employed

\*Measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = 'extremely unimportant', 5 = 'extremely important').

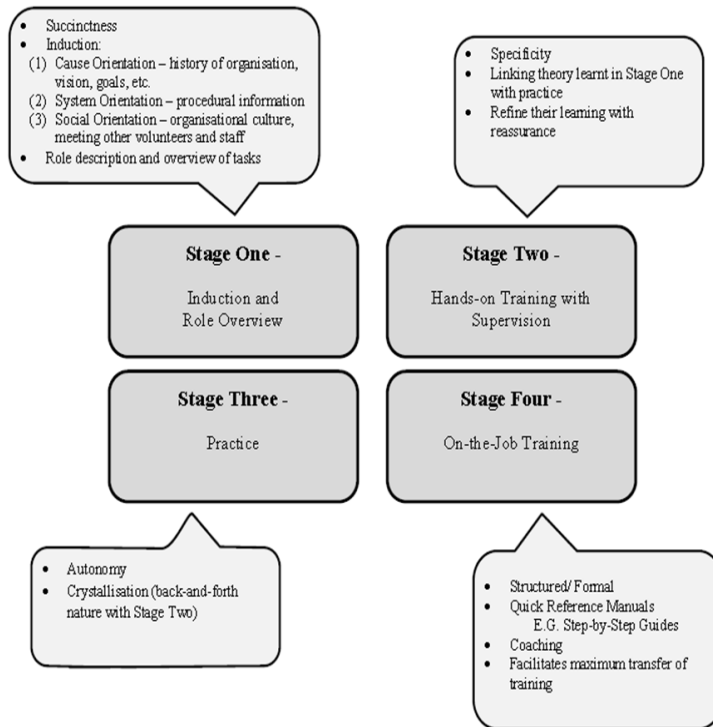
The majority of interviewees were female and their mean age was 21 years, reflecting the fact that most were full-time university students. In this study, all participants fell into the Generation Y age group, as per the definition of Generation Y adopted to guide the study (Sheahan, 2005). Half indicated that volunteering at events is fairly important to them; however, half were also neutral. This finding may reflect that the interviewees at this event were not perennial volunteers, but 'spot' volunteers who sporadically volunteer at events, perhaps to further their skill and knowledge base (Shin & Kleiner, 2003). Attention is now turned to presenting the proposed model of induction and training for young volunteers at events, drawing upon qualitative data gleaned through in-depth interviews with young volunteers at the NUG.

**TRAINING AND INDUCTION OF YOUNG EVENT VOLUNTEERS: A DESCRIPTIVE MODEL**

The design and delivery of effective induction and training programs are indeed necessary to improve the skills, knowledge and attitudes of people, including young people (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Given the dearth of empirically derived knowledge regarding the training and induction needs of young volunteers at events however, the overarching aim of this paper is to propose a descriptive model of training and induction needs pertinent to this cohort. Figure 1 presents a diagrammatical illustration of the proposed model. It is informed by both extant literature and empirical findings from this broader study of young volunteers at a regional sporting event.

**Figure 1.**

Descriptive model of training and induction preferences among young volunteers at the Northern University Games (source: original for this study).



Data indicated that preferences relating to induction and training expressed by young volunteers in this study can be reflected in a four step process: (1) an overview of information necessary for volunteers’ understanding of the event organisation and of the task; (2) demonstration with hands-on experience under the supervision of a trainer; (3) opportunities for the trainee to practice the task autonomously (incorporating a back-and-forth emphasis on practice and demonstration to facilitate crystallisation of the task); (4) and finally, OJT to enable the trainee to put their new skills and knowledge to practice with real-situation-specific duties. Given that approaches to training vary in their effectiveness in different contexts, it is acknowledged that this model is reflective only of the sentiments expressed by the

participants in this case study.

### **Stage One - Induction and Role Overview**

This initial stage is where volunteers are introduced to the event organisation, the event itself, their upcoming roles and responsibilities, and any information relevant to a volunteer's knowledge of the event. Participants in this study sought a background of the event organisation and an overview of their role before undertaking it. For example, DeAnna recalled "they didn't really give us any more information on what they're about, sort of just common knowledge really ... they didn't really talk about much." Jake added that, "we weren't really given any background information at the training." These reactions therefore point towards potentially ineffective induction processes at the case study event, and also reflect a need among young volunteers to understand the organisational context of volunteer roles they are to perform. Indeed, according to Sprogoe and Elkjaer (2010), induction is non-negotiable as all newcomers must go through some form of induction process.

Data indicated that participants prefer training to be succinct, reflected by the notions suggested, for example 'brief', 'clearly explained' and 'focused'. As indicated by Ben, "It can be discouraging if they're giving you too much information." The notion of succinctness is further reflected on by Jason who states that "... you don't wanna have to take on too much information for something that only goes for five days." A further sentiment expressed by NUG volunteers was the formality and timeliness of this initial training. As suggested by some interviewees, it would be useful if induction and training programs could cater for constraints faced by volunteers, through providing training which is spatially and temporally flexible. For example, Ben suggested organising induction and training sessions around volunteers' personal commitments:

Trying to provide a training session to all of the volunteers within their time commitments is complicated ... I think if you could talk to the volunteers and find out what would be the most suitable time for them to attend training, rather than just setting a time, would be better.

An induction should be considered a precursor to training and therefore help prepare the volunteer for their role. An induction should be clearly laid out and cover all important aspects pertaining to the organisation and volunteer's role, whilst establishing performance expectations (Stone, 2010). The delivery format for induction programs will vary according to various organisational characteristics. Smaller events incorporating small volunteer workforces might do well to deliver informal inductions in a small group setting. Within larger organisations, lectures are considered an effective method to impart information to large audiences (Blanchard & Thacker, 2010). Consequently, delivery of induction information via a lecture seems suitable for the NUG because of the large number of volunteers involved.

In describing this first stage of the training and induction model, it is acknowledged that there were challenges faced in eliciting data about the content of induction from interviewees. This issue stemmed from interviewees' confusion around the conceptual differences between induction and training. On reflection of the initial training session Jake stated, "I was expecting to be shown how to do my job," while DeAnna recalled "it was just meeting a lot of other

people who would be working there.” These statements portray the confusion felt by many participants and show a need for induction to be identified as a distinct process. Difficulties in eliciting information from interviewees regarding induction seemed further compounded by the NUG’s integrated approach to induction and training, in which both processes were largely conducted simultaneously. Consequently, interviewees found it difficult to identify processes of induction and training during their volunteer experience, and therefore were typically unable to critique each process in isolation. Further research is therefore needed to verify this stage of the model, and to gain a better understanding of content that young volunteers deem as salient for effective induction into event organisations.

### **Stage Two - Hands-on Training with Supervision**

Stage Two was derived from data in which interviewees alluded to a preference for ‘hands-on training’, coupled with demonstration-based training. Volunteers interviewed also indicated a preference for methods of training which link theory with practice, and suggested that guidance from an experienced trainer at this point would be useful. For example, Ali stated, “I prefer to be shown everything first, cause then I know if someone’s showing me how to do it, then I can ask them questions about what I’m doing.” Furthermore, Trista exclaimed that “... it’s better to learn on the job too as you go, cause then it’s more of a hands-on training rather than just telling you this is what you’ll have to do without being able to do it.” These statements and similar seemed to resonate strongly amongst interviewees, signalling the potential importance of hands-on training.

Volunteers at the NUG also called for specificity at this stage, preferring their role to be explained specifically rather than receiving general broad-brush training. Jake stated that for a volunteer undertaking this role next year “a bit more accurate information would be useful.” This benefits volunteers as it offers them a detailed insight into the requirements of their role. This stage calls for direct supervision, as participants indicated a preference for initial reciprocal feedback with a supervisor, where support and guidance aim to correct any shortcomings. Data suggested that volunteers prefer to have theory relating to their tasks explained to them initially in Stage One, combined with subsequent opportunities to put that theory into practice in a simulated environment in Stage Two.

Spencer-Gray (2009) has shown that humans retain 85 per cent of information delivered when combined with interaction and participation. Consequently, the proposed model advocates that hands-on learning informs knowledge as a further developmental stage, building upon the knowledge and skills volunteers may accrue in Stage One. This stage allows volunteers to develop and experiment with the skills they will need to successfully complete their role (Ferrand & Chanavat, 2006). Supervision also plays a role in volunteers’ satisfaction (Auld, 2004), thus the nature and quality of the supervisor is important to the participants’ learning and ease at which they learn a task.

### **Stage Three - Practice**

Training is underpinned by practice (Spencer-Gray, 2009); hence Stage Three follows on sequentially from Stage Two (hands-on training with supervision). This stage is concerned with allowing the learner to practice what they have learnt under supervision, giving them confidence and responsibility to crystallise a task on their own. A further finding from the

present study is that volunteers desired autonomy in their learning. For example, Emily explained that she would first like the job to be explained to her "... but then after that I like to be able to do the job on my own." This recurring theme suggests participants sought the freedom to practice tasks unsupervised, which would belie a sense of trust and responsibility. This stage is beneficial as it may allow volunteers an opportunity to practice before stepping into their actual role, enabling tasks to be memorised without experiencing the pressure associated with making errors in real-world circumstances. Again this is emphasised by Trista who suggested "... hands-on training before the Games started ... would be good, like making a program for volunteers to practice on."

Indeed, Gratton and Ghoshal (2003) describe Generation Y employees as preferring to work in teams, but most importantly they value autonomy. This is supported by Hidalgo and Moreno (2009) who have suggested that volunteers should have some autonomy when performing their tasks. Data in the present study suggested that autonomy is necessary to allow volunteers to carry out their tasks with personal dedication, ensuring a newcomer is capable of undertaking a task on-the-job before real work occurs. A further example shows the weight autonomy had on the participants, as Trista explained:

Having someone there is good at first, but then after that I like to be able to do the job on my own. I mean if I needed help it's good to have someone there, otherwise it feels like they don't trust you ... I don't like too much supervision.

Data suggested that crystallisation occurs after performing a task once. As Emily explained, "once you do it for the first time, then you get it and can understand what to do from then on." This theme has relevance within this stage as interviewees suggested that once they get it they don't want someone constantly showing them the same thing that they feel they now know. The NUG could conduct these first three stages concurrently on one training day prior to the event. The time-bound nature of events and the ability to cater to volunteers' flexibility suggest a closer examination of volunteers' training needs in order to develop a program appropriate to the event itself. In some cases one training session before the actual event may be all that is required prior to stage four. The final stage emphasises interviewees' preference for the use of OJT as a practical means to train.

#### **Stage Four - On-the-Job Training**

This final stage encompasses the most significant learning phase, as volunteers are able to put all their learned knowledge and prior practice to work. OJT is mostly linked with doing the task as is necessary and gaining hands-on experience whilst being able to link theory with practice in a directive nature. Jake described the training he received as, "... most while doing the job on Monday." Jason added that "There wasn't too much you had to know beforehand. It was just all learning it as I was doing it." Such quotes suggest that OJT was indeed suitable for the short-term nature of the NUG. As this stage ultimately affects the overall event outcomes it is beneficial, not only to the volunteers but to the event organisation, to engage supplementary learning aides, such as coaching and quick reference manuals during OJT. This form of training seemed the most beneficial to the NUG volunteers' learning, and thus is an important stage within the model. Also, for the purposes of the NUG, this type of training was suitable as most tasks were not complicated and OJT allowed volunteers to refine their role-specific skills in

real-world circumstances.

Cirilo and Kleiner (2003) advocate that learning by doing requires employees to actively participate in the learning process. Also, Beaver and Hutchings (2005) note that OJT is overwhelmingly used because organisations have a “preponderance to use ad-hoc training where possible” (p. 596). Consequently, OJT typically tends to lack structure and as such is considered ad-hoc. Indeed, OJT at the NUG did appear to be ad-hoc in nature, lacking any real structure. OJT denotes the use of ‘real work’ in ‘real time’ and thus is an attractive means of training as there are few issues with transfer of learning (Stone, 2010). This sentiment reflects the beneficial nature of OJT to both the event organisation and the volunteers.

A key to effective OJT and transfer of learning is having a skilled trainer that employs positive reinforcement, as people respond better to encouragement (Getz, 2005), effectively increasing their confidence to do the job. Henry (2006) suggests that younger generations prosper with regular coaching and guidance. Suggesting the use of coaching in this step would encourage learning and guidance. Ali stated that the concept of coaching would be welcome, “I would like to have someone to go to when I’m not sure.” In a position where responsibility is not a monetary rewarded concept, coaching provides the guidance and instruction to improve knowledge, skills and work performance if anything were to go wrong or just for reassurance (Blanchard & Thacker, 2010). Another supplementary learning tool proposed by Blanchard and Thacker (2010) is a training manual. This ensures skills taught in prior steps are confidently transferred to the job, and volunteer production on-the-job is improved. Participants interviewed suggested that quick-reference manuals would be beneficial at this stage of training. OJT reflects the sentiment of some volunteers that there was not too much they could learn beforehand, so the emphasis of providing structured OJT is beneficial to the short-term nature of many events.

#### **CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study sought to develop a greater understanding of induction and training processes that are of most salience to young people volunteering at events. Through a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered from a sample of volunteers aged between 18 and 26 years who had volunteered to undertake operational roles at the 2012 NUG, Australia. From this data, and in consultation with extant literature addressing HRD, a four-step descriptive model of induction and training for young volunteers at events was proposed. Getz (1986) argues that models can be process models or theoretical models. Process models help us understand planning and management processes, and as such the model proposed here may be considered a process model of training and induction for young volunteers at events.

Shaw (2009) argues that despite training being crucial to volunteering and short-term events, “there is plenty of room for improvement within this aspect of the volunteer experience” (p. 28). According to Buckley and Caple (2009) there are many different methods and theories which can be applied to training. While the challenge for event managers lies in designing and developing an effective induction and training program. The proposed model may have utility in guiding induction and training processes for young volunteers at other events. Although, it is suggested that the model’s primary value is in stimulating future research, as further verification of various stages within the model is required. Invariably, events have their own

resource, budget and time constraints, consequently implementing any or all four stages may not be feasible. This model, however, is proposed as a process that events with the capacity and resources to train their volunteers may benefit from implementing.

Future researchers may draw upon this model as a theoretical framework for a variety of research avenues. For example, the very nature of episodic volunteers demands different management strategies (Pauline & Pauline, 2009). Thus, research into whether combining processes of induction and training is more beneficial, as opposed to distinct processes, is an area in need of further clarification. Both processes are advocated as crucial to a volunteer's learning and understanding; however, determining the best approach for event managers comes from understanding volunteers' expectations of induction and training. As previously alluded to, participants in this study exhibited limited capacity to critique and discuss issues surrounding training and induction, hence this may also suggest a need for further research. Indeed, Stage One of the model is in need of further verification and development, as this study yielded only limited insights as to the most salient means of induction for young volunteers. Other opportunities for future research exist in that the descriptive model developed could be replicated for other events in different contexts. Looking at the induction and training of young, short-term volunteers in other types of events (e.g. sporting events, local festivals, etc.) would further this study's findings and allow comparisons to be made.

A range of implications for managing volunteer workforces at events have arisen from this study. The management of event volunteers is a challenge in itself as their commitment tends to be short-term (Cuskelly & Auld, 2000). Consequently, volunteers require a more intensive management approach (Cuskelly, Hoye, & Auld, 2006), where careful consideration and planning of the volunteer induction and training program can contribute to simplifying the situation. Data from this study suggests that training should begin with an orientation to the event (Heitmann & Roberts, 2010). Indeed, this study has shown how event managers face a challenge in determining what is relevant to their volunteers' training experiences, and ensuring that volunteers are adequately inducted into the organisation, and feel confident in their assigned roles. This study has also highlighted that event managers should continually evaluate their induction and training processes to better cater for increasing proportions of young volunteers, for example designing induction and training processes to be flexible and therefore better integrate with the dynamic, fast-paced lifestyles exhibited by Generation Y (such as employing an online training component). Preferably, induction could be undertaken prior to initial training at the convenience of volunteers. Further, quick-reference manuals could be used for volunteer roles where initial training may not have been satisfactory or for positions requiring greater knowledge of task processes.

#### **Study Limitations**

In closing, the methodological limitations of this study should be duly acknowledged. Given that various approaches to training vary in their effectiveness in different contexts, it is recognised that the proposed model is reflective only of the sentiments expressed by the participants in this case study. The number of trainees, their existing levels of expertise and knowledge, the material to be presented and the time available should all be considered in determining effective methods of training, how they should be employed and how they should be delivered (Read & Kleiner, 1996; Werner & DeSimone, 2012).

Further, this study only aimed to examine the training and induction methods provided to young, short-term volunteers and is thus a delimitation of the study. As such, the findings may not be relevant to other age groups not specified in this study. The research was further delimited to a single case study; however, Veal (2005) considers a study of one in-depth case a valid research approach. The advantages of using a case study were its relevance to everyday experiences, thus its applicability to real-life situations, and that it offered manageable and flexible data collection (Veal, 2005). Lastly, saturation typically occurs after enough data have been collected to determine themes and where no new information emerges (Byrne, 2001). Although themes were determined for this study, saturation may not have been reached due to the time constraints inherent in this research and the lack of participant interest for a focus group. Nonetheless, despite the inherent limitations the process model proposed in this paper serves as a starting point for further research into areas of study which is growing in importance – how best to induct and train young event volunteers.

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