

SPECIALIZED OR MORE GENERAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS OF TOURISM?



The schools preparing new employees for tourism industry struggle to keep up with changes in the field claim the professionals. Some schools favour specialized training the others teach the students the general fundamentals.

Because of the poor training of students, the HRD (Human Resources Directors) are increasingly reluctant to recruit graduates. **The professionals claim that the schools are too concentrated on students' fundamentals not making efforts to catch up with the developments.** They also complain that for an industry that needs experts, the education is too general and that the students lack specific ideas of the reality of market.

The directors of tourism education establishments do not agree with the criticism. Victor Gervasoni of the Business School of Tourism in La Rochelle told Toumag.com that every year schools organize a development committee with the HRD from large enterprises of given sectors which allow the students to have a very good overview of the market trends. **Many schools also work with students in training and organizing seminars with experts.** The programs sometimes evolve very quickly.

Marie Poulain, the Director of ESCAET (College of Commerce and Business Administration of Tourism) is also in favor of more specialized training. She says that those whose education is too general will find it difficult and probably even too demanding to cope with. The director of ESTHUA (Graduate Institute of Tourism and Hospitality at the University of Angers), Philippe Violier, contradicts her suggesting that the best way to adapt to the requirements of each company is having fundamental and versatile basis.

Specialization is sometimes seen as a setback. It is considered better to choose a sector in which opportunities are provided. This is why Victor Gervasoni advocates general training. He does not want the students to be too specialized, but to have a base strong and wide enough to evolve. His long-term vision is to train students to cope with the jobs of tomorrow.

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