

Tasmanians in Tourism & Hospitality Qualitative Research

Conducted by OMD
Marketing Intelligence –
September 2021

Performance with Integrity.

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Background & Methodology



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01 Background & Methodology






The Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Tasmania is currently experiencing a labour shortage and there is an urgent need to attract employees to help meet this shortage in both the shorter and longer term.

Qualitative research has been undertaken to help uncover both the emotional benefits from those in the industry as well as perceived obstacles to overcome to draw more Tasmanians into the industry.

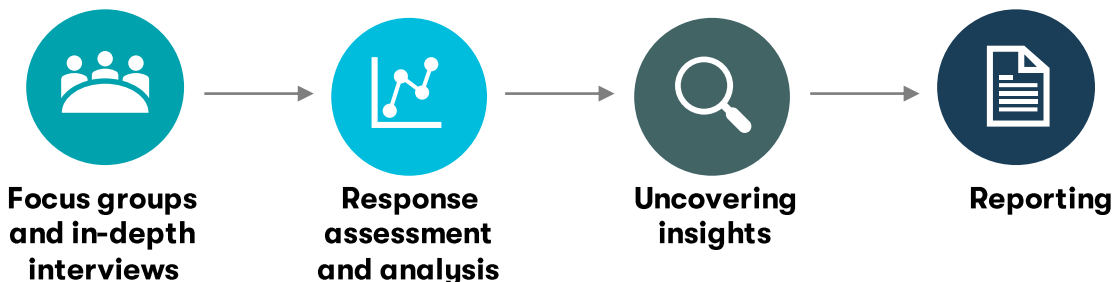
The insights in this report have been identified via focus groups and in-depth interviews carried out by OMD Marketing Intelligence.

01 Background & Methodology

Qualitative data from four focus groups and 5 in-depth interviews form the foundation of this report.

	Sole operators and employers of less than 10 employees in the tourism & hospitality industry	Focus group and in-depth interviews	FG: Monday 20 th 10AM IDI's: Friday 17 th , Monday 20 th and Tuesday 21 st
	Employers of 11+ employees in the tourism & hospitality industry	In-depth interviews	Monday 20 th and Tuesday 21 st
	Employees in the tourism & hospitality industry (younger aged under 25)	Focus group	Wednesday 22 nd 7PM
	Potential employees in the tourism & hospitality industry (younger aged under 25) <i>note –some already had part time experience in industry</i>	Focus group	Thursday 23 rd 6PM
	Potential employees in the tourism & hospitality industry (older aged over 60)	Focus group	Wednesday 22 nd 5:30PM

All dates refer to September 2021



02



Key Findings

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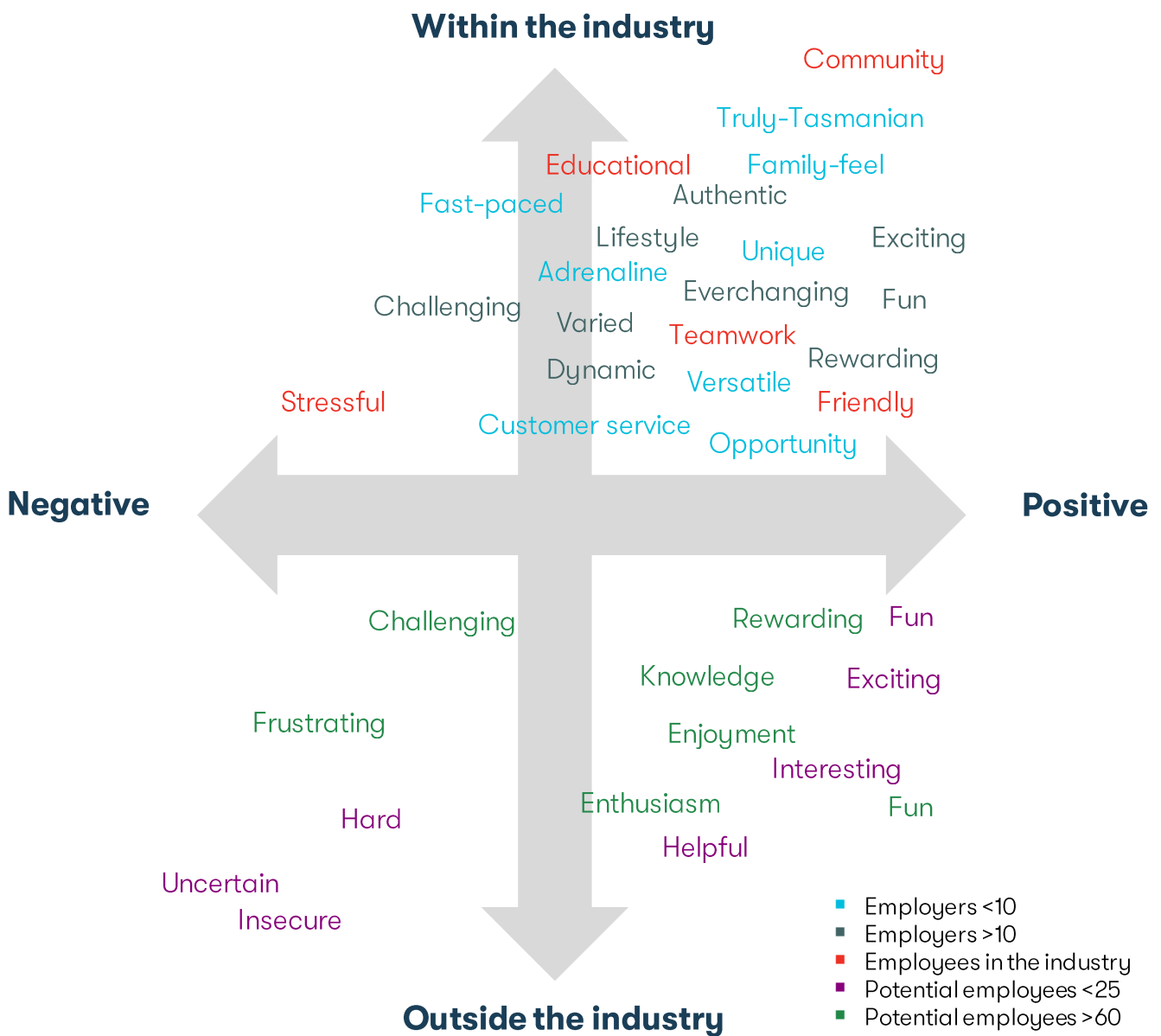


02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Overall the Tourism and Hospitality industry in Tasmania is viewed through a positive lens

When asked to describe the industry in three words most responses were positive with themes around its fun and interesting nature emerging. While the industries fast paced nature was identified, for most it was not seen as a negative.



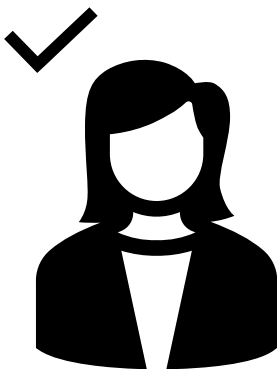
02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Connecting with people and showcasing Tasmania are the best things about the industry

A major drawcard for working in the industry centred around **connecting with people**, in both the experiences one has with people they meet (both the community and travellers) and the people they work with (the friendships they make).

The ability to **showcase Tasmania** is also a passion point for both those in and outside of the industry, and it is seen as being one of the main reasons potential employees would be interested in entering the industry.



Make people happy

"I think you need an innate desire to make people happy. Through food, or service or hospitality experience" – Employer >10

Provide good experiences

"Whatever role you end up playing, you help people have a good experience" – Employer >10

The people you work with

"...everyone working in tourism is on such a high. It's like a natural drug. Working with like-minded people where you aren't just one thing, but all work together to make a destination." – Employer >10

Building connections

"The people you get to meet and the connections you do get to make. You become part of their memorable experiences" – Employer >10

Showcasing Tasmania

"I love the history and heritage of Tasmania...that's the sort of tourism my husband and I are interested in" – Potential employee 60+

Self-improvement

"I was thinking kind of educational. Working in tourism and hospitality you are constantly learning. Things about people and the community" – Employed in the industry

02 Key Findings

Perceptions

The demanding nature of the industry and perceived lack of career progression are the biggest challenges

While employers do not necessarily agree with some of the barriers and challenges of entering the industry, they can see why the perceptions may exist and feel there is a branding issue towards the industry as a whole.



Staffing/retention

"Staffing is our biggest challenge, I have an expectation that everyone feels as passionate as I do and that's not always the case" - Employer <10



Difficult customers

Some of the people that come in, there may not really be our cup of tea, but there isn't much we can do about that" - Employed in the industry



All year round industry

"It is nonstop, our business operates every day of the year and it's not 9-5" - Employer >10



Long/weekend hours

"In every interview I say you will be working when your mates are having fun" - Employer <10



Seasonal work/ lack of hours

"it was full on, but I often found myself with 5 days of work in the summer, but in other other seasons that I wouldn't get any shifts"-Employees in the industry



Lack of career progression

"We have one full timer so if people are looking for a career and a full-time job obviously the percentages are fairly low if you're in hospitality" - Employer <10

02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Some obstacles mentioned for working in regional locations, yet this did not rule out consideration

While some barriers were discussed regarding working in more regional locations, many were still interested in doing so.

Accommodation was seen as the main issue, yet if this was provided to staff (which some employers are already focusing on), then many would still consider working in regional areas. This was seen to be mainly for short term or seasonal roles.

Another issue related to hours available to ensure the relocation was worth it both financially and in terms of work/life balance.

For some, regional work was seen as attractive as it would allow for the employees to explore different parts of the state and learn more about the local culture and heritage.

Some employers with regional hotels were already focussing on staff accommodation and work/life balance to help overcome these obstacles.

02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Difference in opinion for key barriers between employees and employers

Employees/potential employees feel that the industry does not allow for career progression and therefore often choose to find different career paths. Employers feel this perception is incorrect and believe that having passion and a desire to grow is enough to progress in the industry.

Progression

“Unless you are actually going to own a business, I think it is pretty tough to make a career out of it” – Potential employee <25

“I tell them how common it is to work in the industry while studying due to suitable hours and that if they show initiative and work hard, they can progress easily.” - Employer >10

Pay

“I don't think the income and the security of house (is suitable for a long term job). I think you would need two jobs to sustain working in hospo and tourism” – Employee in the industry

“The award is comparable and reasonable. I don't really see the truth in it. Most people in hospitality work above the award conditions.” – Employer >10

Training

“It's more the move from a local pub to an up-market restaurant where waitressing is more formal. I don't see a pathway for me beyond where I am now” – Employee in the industry

“Anything that presents an interest to the employee, we keep the door open (for training), and we figure out if its beneficial to us (the business)” – Employer <10

02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Training is an option for most, however underutilised by employees

Many organisations provide apprenticeships, traineeships and other certification opportunities, mostly through their kitchens or bars. Employers are likely to provide incentives to subsidise some or all of their course fees.

Some employers offer the employee to request training they think would be relevant to them. These organisations are open to considering external training that is staff/role specific as long as it also benefits the business as well.

Internal training – All employers provide internal training, mostly to induct staff or provide paths for progression.

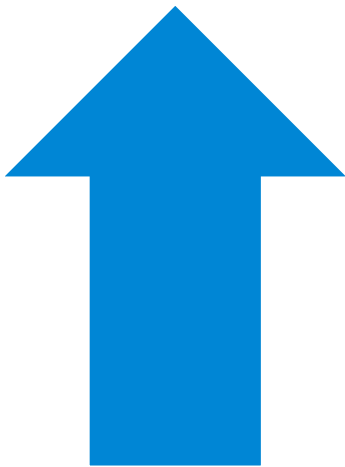


02 Key Findings

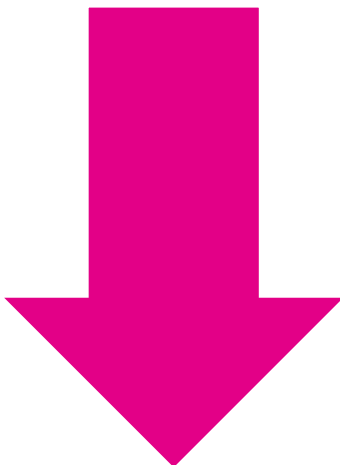
Perceptions

Staff retention an issue of concern as many use the industry as a steppingstone or move from business to business

Businesses that focus on the career progression of individual employees and really put the employees first do not find this as much of an issue.



- Businesses that have no issues with progression have actively worked on building career paths with their staff.
- These businesses are widely sought out by jobseekers both in Tasmania and on the mainland.
- There is also a conscious effort put into making the workplace somewhere their staff want to stay. This can be through a strong work/family culture, initiatives like mental health awareness, good working conditions or perks.



- Those that struggle with progression, often find it hard to fill managerial positions internally.
- There is also a struggle with those who see the tourism and hospitality industry as a temporary job while working towards a career path in a different field.
- Employers also struggle with staff looking for full-time work with more standard weekday hours. This is mostly due to those who have a family.
- Younger people seem quicker to say they are ready to move on or go somewhere higher.

02 Key Findings

Perceptions

Tourism is seen as more desirable than hospitality, even though they are often one of the same

For younger employees, Hospitality is generally seen as a short-term job to support oneself while studying or as a way into the working world. This is due to issues with a lack of clear path for career progression, job security and availability of hours. Tourism, however, is seen as more of a career. The more luxury high end attractions were seen as aspirational and having more opportunity, a function of the training and environment.



02 Key Findings

Expectations

A shift in expectations experienced due to the MasterChef effect

Certain aspects of the industry have been glorified (especially kitchen staff) who have high expectations but are met with the reality of entry level roles.

“We have really had to learn in our recruitment process, almost trying to talk them out of the job by being as realistic as you can about the job.” Employer <10.

Changing expectations around work life balance is also evident as mental health awareness grows.

“Much bigger desire for that work life balance. Reluctant to do fulltime work even if they don’t have anything else going on. 25-30 hours. Meals, breaks, knock of drinks, discounts. Top down, not bottom up thinking. Entitlement. Employees are interviewing you now. The power has shifted to the employee. You have to sell yourself and your benefits.” Employer >10.

02 Key Findings

COVID-19

While COVID-19 has had an impact on recruitment, employers acknowledge shortages prior to the pandemic.

Most employers acknowledge a skills/labour shortage prior to the onset of Covid-19, however many are finding this particular period more difficult. This is mostly due to a lack of international workers and job security/personal safety in the industry;

Some feel they are more successful than other organisations because their business is often sort out by potential employees;



“Lack of international workforce participants that were shooed off during covid. Just not enough people to make good choices when hiring. It's the hardest it has ever been.” – Employer >10

“At the moment it is getting difficult, mainly because of Covid. People are concerned about the amount of work if covid comes down. People are nervous to be in hospitality, so they look for something else.” – Employer <10

“We are quite fortunate, but we've worked really hard to achieve and maintain an employer of choice status.” – Employer <10

02 Key Findings

Recruitment

While employers often encourage those around them to work in the industry, employees are more cautious

Employers are likely to encourage younger friends and family to join the hospitality and tourism industry. They often suggest work in the industry is suitable for those still studying due to the flexible hours or for those wanting to take a year off after finishing school.

They express that if you are willing to show initiative and work hard, they can progress easily. Some highlight how different roles like housekeeping and front of house might not seem glamorous from the beginning, but can lead to very influential roles as the employee progresses.

Those who are already employed in the industry agree that it is a good industry for someone who is looking for flexibility and would encourage friends/family for that reason. However, they discuss working in the tourism and hospitality industry as being better for the short term, and not sustainable in terms of income and security.

They can appreciate the skills they have learnt and the ease of accessing roles, but feel that to have a career in the industry, a person must be very passionate. Some also feel that the tourism sector has more opportunity for a sustainable career path, over hospitality.

Both employers and employees noted that they did have friends/family who were not well suited to the industry and therefore would not refer certain people in. They believed that those who lacked interpersonal skills, or who were quite introverted who not make it, nor those who wanted a slower paced role who may be better off in retail.

02 Key Findings

Recruitment

While still using conventional methods, both employers and employees have found the most success through personal connections

WOM	Employers often welcome personal recommendations from staff and contacts within the industry.
Seek	Seek is the most common platform used to find candidates, however, employers don't feel it is where they find the best quality applicants. Some suggest it is their last resort.
Social Media	Social media is increasingly being used for recruitment through business social media accounts. Staff are also encouraged to share job vacancies via their personal socials.
LinkedIn	LinkedIn is increasingly becoming a more common place for employers to find for skilled talent.
Newspaper	While not as common, Newspapers are said to be a reliable tool to find local and quality applicants.
Job portals	Broadsheet job portal was mentioned as an effective way of finding skilled talent.
School career days	Organisations sometimes use school career days as a way of attracting younger people. Others create relationships with local schools to create recruitment programs.

Some have found continuous success using these methods, while others struggle to find new hires. Both employers and employees have the most success with recruitment through personal connections, rather than traditional job searching methods, like job boards.

02 Key Findings

Recruitment

Hires are made based on attitude and personality. The person needs to be passionate about their work

Employers feel that while some roles require experience and skills, there are not many pre-requisites for employment. Most entry level positions can be trained on the job, so they are looking for certain personality attributes like warmth and a good attitude. There is a plethora of opportunities for training and career progression for this type of person, however the right people are hard to come by.



02 Key Findings

Considerations by age

Age is not seen as a consideration of hiring. When hiring older or younger staff, attributes like skill level, attitude and ability are more important.

In most cases, employers are likely to consider hiring both young inexperienced candidates, and older applicants. While age and experience is a consideration for some roles, employers collectively agree that attitude is most important, and capability can become important for some role types;

“Its not about the age but about the attitude and personality” – Employer <10

“Really comes down to personality and dealing with people and developing rapport” – Employer <10

There is an openness to provide training to fill any skill gaps and work with the individual to find a role that suits them best;

“No one should be treated different. Look at what they need and train them up” – Employer <10

Having a generation agnostic workplace was seen as a positive as it meant that individuals could interact with younger/older staff members they wouldn't normally cross paths with.

Employers believe it to be a very inclusive industry.

02 Key Findings

Considerations for younger staff

Some concern over younger hires' resilience, work ethic and communication skills

Yes - largely due to personality. They think it's all about them. They are more aware of mental health but somehow it makes them less resilient and more fragile.
– Employers >10

We're getting young ones coming in with zero aspiration... there doesn't seem to be that 'I know where I want to go, I know what I want to do' feeling anymore" – Employers <10

"I look at the guys now and everyone just comes in does 2-3 hours and then goes home, there's nothing extra... there isn't any expectation that there's commitment to it" – Employer <10

Isolation issues due to working in regional areas in Tasmania or working hours (night/weekends) that keep them from socialising with friends also a concern.

"In every interview I say you will be working when your mates are having fun" – Employer <10

As well as more tactical challenges such as availability and transport.

02 Key Findings

Considerations for older staff

Older people are often mentioned as having a strong passion for Tasmania and its history

It is seen as a strong quality to be able to story tell and connect with customers. Also, their life experience allows them to communicate better with both customers and staff;

“Definitely we are open to it. Some of our best people driving our buses and land bus tours have been in the older age group. Over the years we have had people have major career changes to come work for us.” - Employer >10

[Older staff] have life experience and similar views to customers - Employer >10

“We know exactly what each other wants and can communicate a bit clearer. They are more self-aware. If they aren’t coping or it’s not for them, they can voice that.” - Employer >10

However, employers also acknowledge that age and experience levels become important for some roles within their businesses. Youth are more likely to be offered entry level positions and capacity is sometimes limited by the availability of managers to train them. Older employees are also less likely to be able to perform in roles that are physically demanding;

“There is an age where people realise they can't move as well as they need to on open boats. Its all about ability and skill level rather than age with us.” - Employer >10

02 Key Findings

Drivers to the industry by age

Different levers pull the different age groups into wanting to work in the industry



For the younger employees/potential employees, the fun and fast paced nature is seen as appealing. It is seen as rewarding to work in the community and getting to know both locals and tourists alike.

The non-9-5 nature of the industry can be beneficial as younger staff often juggle study and it can be an easy industry to get a foot in the door.



Older potential employees are looking more for an income top-up as they celebrate more time to themselves after their working career. They believe connecting with others would be rewarding and want to create a more personalised experience.

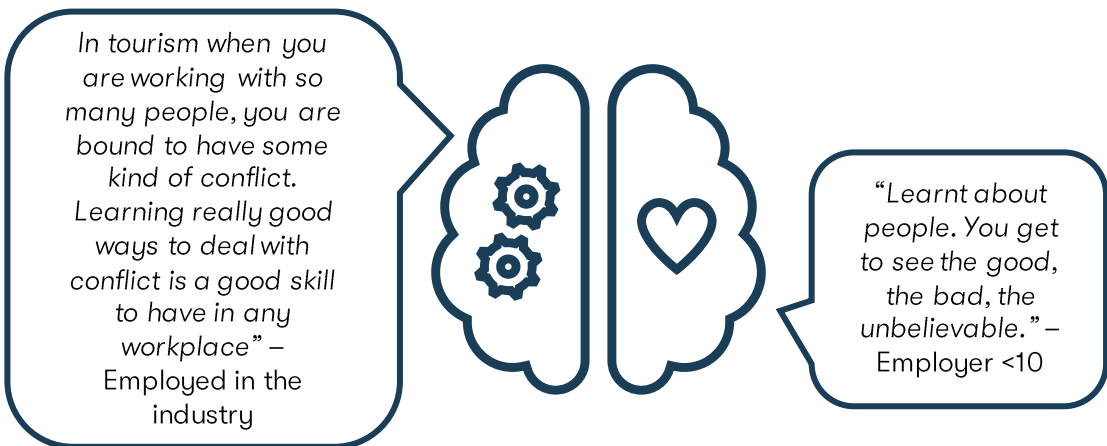


02 Key Findings

Transferrable skills

Outside of the day-to-day, there are many personal and transferable skills learnt

Most employers and employees speak passionately about the things they have learnt from working in the tourism and hospitality industry, there was an overarching theme of connection and human psychology. They both feel the skills they have learnt can easily cross over into any role or industry.



Other skills include;

Problem solving skills

To listen to your gut instinct

How to effectively time manage / organisation skills

Understanding the psychology of people to effectively communicate

Communication skills / confidence

How to create a personal connection with people– both with staff and guests

Leadership/management skills

Mentally manage stressful situations

03



Summary and Implications



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03 Summary and Implications

Overall, the Hospitality and Tourism industry in Tasmania is seen in a fairly positive light, especially by employers, and described as fun, fast paced, and interesting. The positivity shown by employees was mostly seen through a shorter-term lens. While they too described the industry as fun, there were clear issues around the industry not being sustainable for longer term work. There is a difference in opinion when it came to training and progression with employers believing that there is a plethora of opportunities for training and development, yet many employees could not see a clear path to progression.

Employees/potential employees were also concerned about job security/availability of hours in the industry, which has been amplified by the impact of COVID-19 and the lack of tourism. Younger staff also noted the downside of working nights and weekends and the impact that has had on their social life.

03 Summary and Implications

It is widely understood that the industry is not for everyone (but it can be suitable for every age group, which is stressed both by older and younger audiences) and that it takes a special type of person to succeed. This person needs to be passionate about their work and a real people person, however, this person can be hard to come by. Some employers believe there is a branding issue towards the industry as a whole, believing that outsiders perceive the work to be low value and undesirable, which causes hiring to be an ongoing and difficult process.

Personal connections for recruitment are relied on by both employers and employees. Many employers are also using job boards such as Seek, Scout and even LinkedIn, yet some list as private advertisers to avoid the stigma around relisting or hiring for multiple jobs. Social media is also growing as a source of recruitment. Regarding employment prerequisites, there are few. While education / experience is nice to have, hires are chosen based on attitude and personality as 'a smile and warmth are the two most important things'.

While age was not seen as an issue when hiring, there were some considerations when hiring younger and older staff. Issues with resilience, confidence and lack of a career plan were mentioned for younger hires (as well as accommodation in regional areas), while concerns about physical and technical ability were cited for older hires. There was a sense of worth that older employees can bring to the industry including an understanding of the history of Tasmania and the ability to tell a story. This was echoed with older potential hires who demonstrated this passion.

For younger employees, Hospitality is generally seen as a short-term job to support oneself while studying or as a steppingstone to another job. This is due to issues around a lack of clear direction for career progression, job security and availability of hours. Tourism, however, is seen as more of a career. The more luxury high end attractions were seen as aspirational, a function of the training and environment. The industry was perceived to be busier and more stressful than other industries e.g. retail - but this wasn't seen as a negative as it helped develop personal skills such as problem solving. It can also act as a rite of passage for many young people.

03 Summary and Implications

While this industry definitely has barriers to entry/retention, there were many positives among those with experience in the industry.

A major drawcard for working in the industry centred around connecting with people. The people are seen to be the best thing about the industry. This is twofold and includes both the experiences you have with people you meet (both the community and travellers) and the people you work with (the friendships you make). Those who work in the industry also believe it to be an inclusive industry.

Another major drawcard is the passion for their state/area or specific interests (e.g. wineries, activities) that many were seen to have. This industry allows people to share their experiences, their stories and their love for their passion with others. Being able to make other people see the beauty in their passion points, was something that resonated with both younger and older audiences.

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