



“Leadership Skills for New Leaders?”

A longitudinal study identifying the key leadership competencies required of new Engineering and Food Technology graduates

Presented by:

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Abstract

Educational institutions compete with one another in attempting to encourage students to enrol in their courses in preference to their competitors. Student numbers attract funding from government organisations and other private sources to enable programmes to be delivered at the highest level of quality possible. Gaps in the delivery of services, between what is expected and then delivered, can have the effect of pushing students to alternative educational providers.

A key issue facing educators in the tertiary sector is how to ensure that graduating students are leaving their educational organisations with the skills and knowledge - frequently referred to as key competencies – that they need to succeed and thrive in the workplace. As a service organisation it is imperative that the needs of actual and/or potential customers, and key stakeholders are adequately determined and that graduates leave with these needs having been met. To ensure this, it must be made certain that the content of the curriculum is not merely what the lecturer or educator believes is required, but also what students, future employers and other key stakeholders believe is essential. Once this has been established, learning activities can then be tailored that will assist in covering both the theoretical and practical requirements in a way that most effectively delivers the key competencies while enhancing the outcomes for all concerned parties.

This paper shares the findings of a 5 year study undertaken with the aim of identifying what both undergraduate Food Technology and Engineering students, and the business people who will subsequently employ some of them, believe are the key leadership competencies to be taught as part of the students' study, and how these compare with the priorities determined by their lecturers. The paper identifies what these key customers and stakeholders believe to be the top 16 leadership competencies required of new leaders in business, and how these priorities were determined. It then describes how the students used a variety of pedagogical methods to assist in the development of these competences.

The models used within this study included the New Zealand Business Excellence Framework (Categories 2 & 3) The Service Quality Gap Model (Parasuraman et al (1985), Curry (1999), and Luk & Layton (2002)). The framework used for determining the key leadership competencies in this study was the Competing Values Framework developed by Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, McGrath and St. Clair (2005, 2007).

Biography:

Nicky joined the School of Engineering and Advanced Technology in February 2002. She lectures on both internal and extramural papers on leadership and management, quality management, process improvement and business excellence, is a National Evaluator for the New Zealand Business Excellence Awards, and joint co-ordinator for the suite of qualifications available within the Quality Systems framework taught at Massey University.

Over the last twenty or so years she has held a number of positions in the quality field. These have included working as Staff Development Consultant, Quality Management Trainer and Policy



Coordinator for a large health care organisation, and as the Organisational Development Manager for a large insurance company (where she had responsibility for training and development initiatives and business process quality). Nicky has also worked as a business consultant. As a consultant she has worked with both small and large companies (private and government owned), and specialised in quality management practices. This work has included analysing business processes to determine areas for improvement, process redesign, policy writing, managing improvement projects and teams, and training staff in quality management practices. Immediately prior to joining the staff of Massey University Nicky ran her own consulting company.

Presentation experience

Nicky has presented at numerous conferences including the previous World Congress in NZ in 2006, and in Scotland in 2007. Most recently she has presented at the SOMF in Florence and EIASM conference in Malta in 2011. As a lecturer she is used to giving professional presentations.