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**An investigation into the use and uptake of short courses
for staff development in the New Zealand Fast Moving
Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, with a related case
study of the New Zealand Food & Grocery Council's (FGC)
Education Project.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
Requirements for the degree of

**Master of Management
In Management**

At Massey University
Palmerston North
New Zealand.

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2012

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An investigation into the use and uptake of short courses for staff development in the New Zealand Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry, with a related case study of the New Zealand Food & Grocery Council's (FGC) Education Project.

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Paper Number: 152.800

ABSTRACT

The first training priorities for the New Zealand FMCG industry are short courses in sales and commercial acumen. Second priorities are leadership, productivity, people management, category management and marketing. Large FMCG meet their training needs with in-house courses, but SME's can not afford in-house courses so they require externally provided courses. Required outcomes from training are improved employee performance, efficiency, productivity, recruitment and retention, creation of company competitive advantage, market positioning and increased bottom line performance.

FMCG Companies do not value or fund employees to University qualifications because of the cost and time involved and an industry perception that University courses do not address the "uniqueness" of the FMCG industry. There is some support for a staircase from industry specific short courses an industry designed Bachelor degree, but without an FMCG endorsement. Companies believe that employees should benefit from company funded training, but identified employee benefits are nebulous "satisfactions" which in reality are retention devices that benefit the company rather than the individual.

Apart from avoiding the industry's "busy" period from October till Mid February there are no particular requirement for course timing or structure provided sufficient lead time is given to allow adjustment of attendees work schedules. Course fees are a major barrier to SME's using short courses to train their staff. Other costs such as travel to courses and the loss of staff from their work to attend training are not issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge my original supervisor, Dr Philip Ramsey, for his help in this research. I also acknowledge and thank my subsequent supervisor, Associate Professor Paul Toulson. He guided me through a topic which I considered as “touchy feely” compared to the rigorous scientific research in which I spent the first fifteen years of my career. Particularly, he helped me convert from a writing style developed for scientific papers, authoring a book published by Reeds and business consultancy reports to the “gentler and more explicit” style of thesis writing. His approach restored my faith in academia and demonstrated that academics can also understand the business world and the needs of mature students.

I take this opportunity to recognise my daughter Nicky and Tim my son. At 36 and 37 they have already achieved far beyond anything I could ever have expected of them and I am particularly proud of the people they have become.

I also thank my daughter Nicky for her help and insight into the vagaries of the FMCG industry. Nicky has worked in the FMCG industry for sixteen years and she is not only my guide in the FMCG industry but is also my business colleague being the McFarlane in our company Burns McFarlane Limited.

I thank my wife Brenda for her continued support. I know she sometimes wonders why having already achieved a B.Sc., MBA and Ph.D I still continue studying. My answer is that my career has been one of continual learning and I never cease to be amazed by what I do not know. Hence I enjoy exploring new topics and gaining new insights and ways of thinking.

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