

Australian Centre For Lifestyle Horticulture

Education and Training Strategy

Strategic Approach to Skills Development - 2008



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Every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information presented in this publication is correct and up to date.



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Executive Summary

The Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture is the peak industry body for member associations representing the nursery industry; turf management; parks and gardens; irrigation; landscape design and implementation and flower growing, has sought to establish a training culture for its members. The future growth of the lifestyle horticulture industry depends on its ability to attract and retain personnel, a stable skilled and responsive workforce and availability of better career paths and training options.

Lifestyle horticulture aims to increase its competitiveness in national and international markets. Training is regarded as an important tool to support the industry's ability to move into these markets. The purpose of this strategy is to establish the training needs of members of ACLH and provide direction for meeting identified needs.

When compared to other rural industries, the lifestyle horticulture sector has great potential for attracting young workers. Lifestyle options, uptake of technology and accessible location provide a strong basis for marketing the industry to a potential workforce.

However, education and training in lifestyle horticulture has seen a significant drop in numbers of participants in recent years which will have an adverse impact for industry in the future. The industry as a whole is aware of these issues and has been proactive in the development of an ACLH sub-committee to target the problem.

A training needs analysis was conducted to identify gaps in the skills needed by the lifestyle industry in order to develop an industry strategic plan. The Needs Analysis quantified the skill needs of members and the preferred delivery methods. Members were given the opportunity to complete a telephone skill survey and direct consultation was undertaken with individual members of the ACLH Executive Committee.

It was found that surveyed members had a high level of post-school education, were willing to send staff to training and employed mainly permanent staff. Most businesses had between 1 and 10 staff

Business and financial management training was considered the most useful to members, particularly in business assessment and planning and understanding of financial information. Businesses indicated their willingness to examine and analyse their business and to incorporate new technologies and practices into their business.

Personal development skills of managing change and decision making also reflected the desire for change in lifestyle horticulture. Marketing skills rated highly.

Participants expressed a desire to learn through small workshops and networking opportunities such as study tours, internet forums and online case studies of successful businesses.

The survey results indicate that ACLH should consider developing a tailored business management program to include skills in:

- Business assessment and benchmarking

- Understanding financial reporting
- Developing marketing plans
- Managing change
- Negotiation and conflict resolution

Across sector participation is important to establish networking and encourage sharing of ideas. The program should be presented as a series of one day workshops but could also include shorter sessions aimed at a particular topic. All programs should incorporate networking opportunities with other members, case studies of successful businesses (both horticultural and other) and visits to other businesses.

Although business training was regarded as essential across industry sectors, differences in other training needs were identified. Marketing skills were seen as key issues in the flower growing and nursery industries, while production and agronomic skills were important to flower growers and the parks and garden industry. The landscape industry indicated a preference for training in business and financial management but overall training rated very low with this industry. The turf industry showed a broad need for training in all areas but this may be the result of the low numbers surveyed in this industry. This justifies further investigation.

Development of the training section of the ACLH website is warranted to include case studies of successful businesses across all lifestyle horticulture sectors, networking opportunities and the promotion of training courses.

ACLH and its members have had involvement in training of owners/ managers and staff in the lifestyle horticulture industry. To further build on the past successes, the industry needs to look towards across industry collaboration that focuses on common need to see the similarities, rather than the differences between sectors. Training is a way forward to achieve this commonality for an industry.

1. Objectives

The project objectives were to:

- Identify the skill needs of the major commodity members of the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture (ACLH)
- Identifying training opportunities and relationships that will assist with the development of a training culture in the industry;
- Develop an integrated training strategy for ACLH.
- Recommend actions to improve training outcomes for ACLH and its members

2. Introduction

The Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture (ACLH) is a collaborative venture to assist the lifestyle horticulture industry to meet its challenges and to facilitate accelerated industry growth and profitability. The mission of ACLH is to become a world-class centre of excellence for tropical and subtropical lifestyle horticulture.

The members of ACLH are:

- Australian Institute of Horticulture
- Flower Association of Queensland Incorporated
- Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland
- Parks and Leisure Australia
- Landscape Queensland Incorporated
- Queensland Turf Producers Association.

The lifestyle horticulture is one of Queensland's largest primary industries with a turnover in excess of \$5 billion annually. There are 4,300 businesses identifying as part of the lifestyle horticulture industry in Queensland, most of which are located in the south-east region of the state.

Lifestyle horticulture industry is a diverse group and the businesses engaged in the industry vary widely, as does the commodities and target markets. In addition to this complexity, the industry faces a number of challenges in its current operating environment.

Access to water of sufficient quantity and quality is a major concern, as is the serious labour shortages affecting all industries. Other challenges faced by the industry include the need to measure and reduce the industry's environmental footprint, and to inform consumers about the quality of the products. The industry's competitiveness needs to be boosted with export markets and expansion of domestic markets.

In the face of these challenges, achieving sustainable business growth requires new strategies, business models and knowledge. To be competitive in the marketplace requires a long-term commitment to developing the industry's people resources through increased skills and training.

To achieve this aim, ACLH has identified the need for skill development for its members and their staff. Its stated aim is to:

Increase skill levels and professional development to support a competitive lifestyle horticulture industry in national and international markets.

Education and training in lifestyle horticulture has seen a significant drop in numbers of participants in recent years which will have an adverse impact for industry in the future. The industry as a whole is aware of these issues and has been proactive in the development of an ACLH sub-committee to target the problem.

To develop a Strategic Approach to Skills Development for the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture, desktop research was conducted to gain an insight into current practice.

Barriers to learning participation

There are many barriers to training which have been studied extensively in primary industries with similarity to the lifestyle horticulture industry.

In the *Queensland Sustainable Lifestyle Horticulture Project* in February 2008, researchers found that the lifestyle horticulture industry is not viewed as attractive career option with other industries paying higher wages. This is combined with lower enrolments in training courses, less program offerings and downward pressure on course content by lower ability applicants. The result has been a serious decrease in skill level in the industry workforce.

In *Horticultural Training Strategy: A project by the Victorian Farmers' Federation* in June 2007, Ann Young found that training content which did not meet needs, courses that were too long and costly, trainers unaware of best practice and training pitched at the wrong level. Aligned with these problems, there was need for participants "to be reengaged after completing a training program".

A study in South Australia, *Beyond Training and Development - Achieving On-Farm Adoption*, January 2007, found that barriers were often centred on logistics - time, money, transport, and childcare. There were also barriers of age and level of education, with older, less educated farmers being unwilling to take up training. Self-esteem influenced attitude to training, as well.

Promotion of training for both managers and individuals already employed in industry can be difficult when time away from duties is used to attend training. This can impact heavily on a small business with few staff. Employers need to see demonstrated benefits of regular training to boost participation rates.

It appears that employers do not always value highly trained staff as they perceive trained employees will increase labour costs, or may leave for alternative employment.

Factors to promote participation

Some training programs and providers are changing their approach to rural training and are having success in increasing participation. Young (2007) found that the better training providers work with industry to meet their needs. Training/information delivery needs to be timely, in simple language with comfortable locations in subject areas where growers see value in increasing their knowledge base which is reflected in returns to their business. Content needs to be simple and should reflect “industry best practice”. Simple “bite-sized” content, delivered with best-practice and a recognised pathway through to management programs was important.

Success factors outlined in *Beyond Training and Development - Achieving On-Farm Adoption* (2007) were programs that focus on ‘whole of business’, have credible presenters, with opportunities for action, adaption and reflection. They should also be part of an on-going learning process. The support of mentors was critical.

3. ACLH Training Activities

The members of ACLH conduct training and skill development within their own organisations. The training is quite diverse, at various Australian Qualification Training Framework levels and there is no coordinated approach to training which could be generic across ACLH members.

The following is a summary of current training in member organisations.

Australian Institute of Horticulture (AIH)

The Australian Institute of Horticulture is an incorporated association of professional horticulturists who are trained in the science and cultural management of plants. Members are required to have horticultural qualifications to gain entry into the organisation with a minimum of a trade level qualification. Qualifications can range from Certificate I in Horticulture to post-graduate qualifications at university level. This training is available through government training organisations such as TAFE.

Apprenticeships are also available for staff to increase their skill level and qualifications with administration and training delivery by mainly private training organisations.

The industry recognises the need for a skilled labour force and actively encourages participation in training. Australian Institute of Horticulture members also provide on-the-job training for their staff when other options are not easily available.

Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ)

The Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland (NGIQ) is Queensland's peak industry body representing the nursery industry: production nurseries, retail nurseries and garden centres, manufacturers and agents for allied products. NGIQ deliver a continuous flow of relevant courses for industry to 'up skill'. In 2008, the organisation offered training in:

- Retail and Production Waterwork - to support water efficiency
- Silent Salesperson
- Managing Staff Performance
- Biosecurity
- ChemCert
- Media Management
- Recruiting & Selecting the Right Staff
- Drawing Professional Planting & Garden Designs
- Costing for Profit + Preparing & Monitoring Budgets
- Integrated Pest Management
- Safe Work Practices

Irrigation Australia Limited (IAL)

Irrigation Australia Limited (IAL) is Australia's leading organisation representing the breadth of the Australian irrigation industry. It has members covering all sectors of the industry, from water users, consultants, designers and installers through to educational institutions, government, manufacturers and retailers.

IAL has been proactive in developing a range of courses primarily designed to increase the professionalism of the irrigation industry.

The organisation developed an entry level course for individuals to learn the skills required to audit and evaluate existing irrigation systems. It has also developed a nationally recognised set of irrigation qualifications.

The following list shows the current qualifications on offer:

- Irrigation efficiency course
- Certificate II in Irrigation - suitable for trade assistant
- Certificate III in Irrigation - suitable for trade person
- Certificate IV in Irrigation - suitable for leading hand or supervisor
- Diploma in Irrigation (level V) - suitable for manager or owner operator (IAL, 2007).

Parks and leisure Australia (PLA)

Parks and Leisure Australia is the key professional association which provides a broad range of services to members of the parks and leisure industry. Membership ranges across staff and management of parks, gardens, sport, aquatic, rehabilitation; aged hostels and recreation centres, at local and state government levels, students from tertiary institutions, academics, private consultants and private operators of facilities.

PLA regularly hold workshops for members to gain vital insights into the leisure industry.

Landscape Queensland Industries (LQI)

Landscape Queensland (LQI), is the peak body that represents the interests of the Queensland's landscape contractors, landscape designers, suppliers of products and services and education providers.

LQI have developed a certification system to assist in increasing professionalism in the landscape trade. Certificate III in Horticulture (Landscaping) is required for licensing through Building Services Australia as any hard landscaping with a greater value than \$1,000 must be registered with BSA and have a contract in place.

Other certification such as chemical application should also be obtained by the landscape industry, particularly in relation to maintenance programs for projects. For soft landscaping

involving soil preparation or planting a licence is not required. LQI would like to extend BSA licensing to encompass soft landscaping and needs to negotiate further with BSA and QDPI&F on this issue.

Australian Landscape Industries have worked with Agrifood Industry Skills Council to develop a more specific approach to the content of Certificate III in Horticulture (Landscape).

On the job training is preferred with businesses able to supply suitable trainers for programs. The problem is uptake by the industry. One reason is the transient nature of the workforce. Staff are quite mobile which influences the willingness of managers to place investment in baseline training.

Flower Association of Queensland Incorporated (FAQI)

Flower Association of Queensland Incorporated (FAQI) is the peak industry organisation for the Queensland cut flower industry. Membership includes cut flower growers, grower groups and allied traders. Training is not seen as a high priority for this industry with participation rates quite low.

The barriers to training are based on the inability of owners/ managers to leave the farm to attend training. The industry organisation has recognised this problem and has presented short workshops focussed on specific issues, particularly in production skills. For example, industry experts present topics such as new varieties and management problems such as invasion by wildlife. The response to these programs has been encouraging.

The difficulty faced by this industry is the removal of the federally funded FarmBis program which provided a subsidy for rural training. The cost of having world renowned specialists' present workshops can be prohibitive.

FAQI are actively developing and presenting workshops to assist their members with water efficiency which are presented on-farm and can be accessed by as many flower growers as possible.

Queensland Turf Producers Association (QTPA)

The Queensland Turf Producers Association (QTPA) is the turf industry peak body in Queensland. The industry has a very low participation rate for training with little incentive for staff in the way of career progression. As a whole, training is not seen as an investment although the industry body itself, has presented a number of different programs over time. This is in strong contrast to the leisure turf industry such as golf courses, which have a large number of trained staff with a clear career progression.

Training for this industry is more successful if presented 'on-farm' in short time spans, with the training being very focussed on specific topics. With the trend towards certification of environmental practices in all rural industries, QTPA are examining the competitive advantage of training that result in environmental assurance schemes. They are also currently developing and presenting workshops to assist their members with water efficiency.

4. Methodology

The project was conducted by Dianne Fullelove, with assistance of ACLH Executive Officer, Kathryn Young, and ACLH Staff.

For the purpose of the project, the lifestyle horticulture industry was defined as including all members of organisations aligned with ACLH. These were:

- Australian Institute of Horticulture
- Flower Association of Queensland Incorporated
- Nursery & Garden Industry Queensland
- Parks and Leisure Australia
- Landscape Queensland Incorporated
- Queensland Turf Producers Association.

During the course of the project face to face interviews and telephone surveys were conducted with individual ACLH members and key stakeholders.

A training needs analysis was conducted to identify gaps in the skills needed by the lifestyle industry in order to develop an industry strategic plan in skills development so that the industry can meet the current challenges. The Needs Analysis quantified the skill needs of people in businesses and organisations in all sectors of the lifestyle industry. It also captured those attributes that enhance or detract from training uptake, such as delivery methods.

Members were given the opportunity to complete a skill survey (See Appendix 1). The survey was conducted as a telephone survey to industry members selected from all stakeholders in ACLH. Direct consultation was undertaken with individual members of the ACLH Executive Committee.

Particular attention was paid to include minority groups including members less than 35 years, women and members with a non-English speaking background.

Information was collected on:

- Type of business
- Size of business
- Age of participant
- location
- Language spoken at home
- Highest level of education

Participants were asked to rank their need for skill development in the following areas:

- Manage the Business

- Manage Finances
- Manage investments
- Improving Yourself
- Manage change
- Marketing the Product
- Improving Production
- Staff management
- Natural Resource Management

Finally, the survey established information on the preferred training delivery method of the participants. A wide range of delivery methods was listed to provoke responses to methods that may not have been explored previously.

Survey findings were collated to establish trends in:

- Skill needs
- Preferred delivery methods

Skill development in each of the stakeholder organisations was identified as well as generic training needed across the lifestyle industry. The skill needs were matched to the location, size and type of business.

Training priorities were established and an action plan with a timeline for the industry was completed.

5. Results

Results from the across industry survey have been analysed to determine the training needs of members of the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture. Forty-three participants responded to a telephone survey and made individual comments on their training needs.

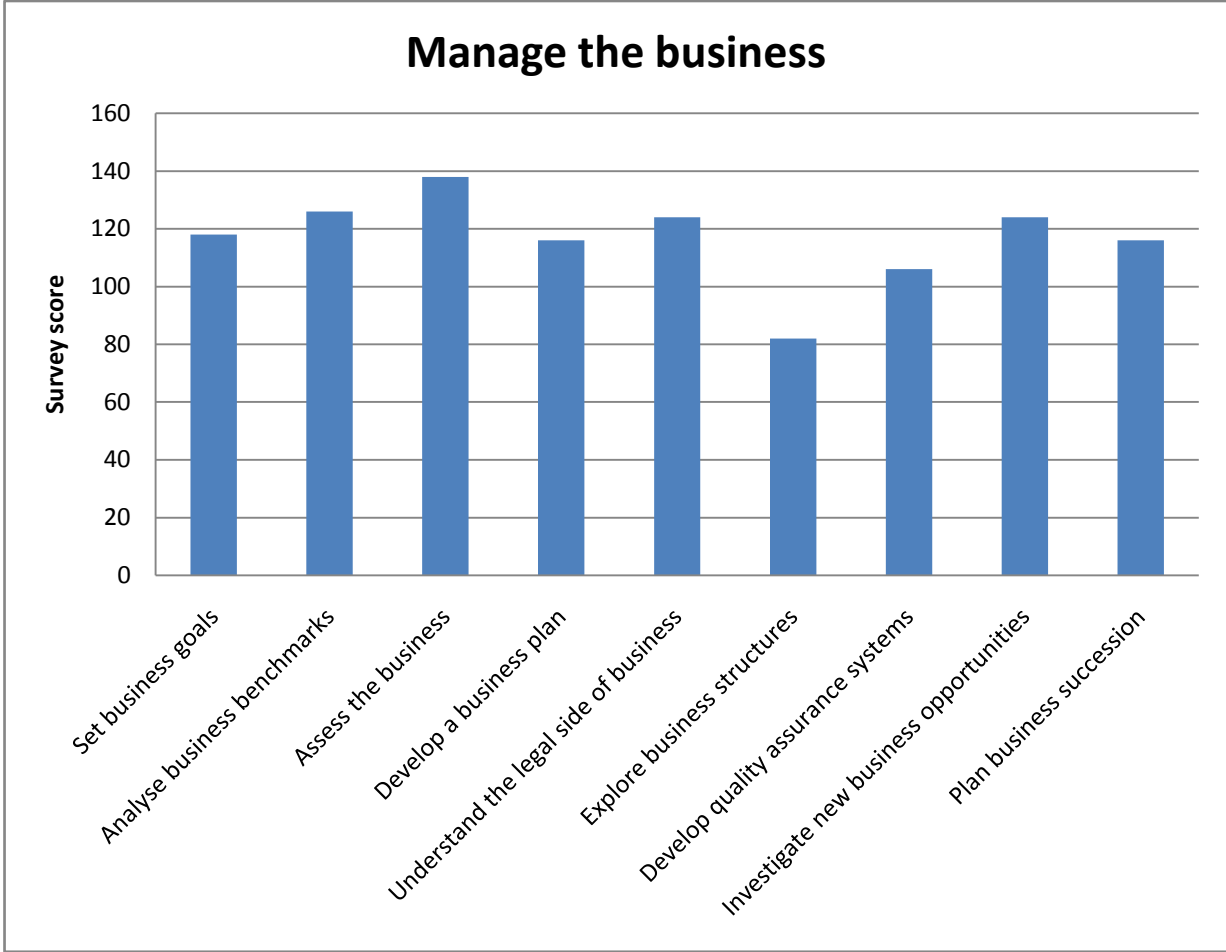
The participants chosen in the survey reflected the membership characteristics of ACLH. There were 22 from the nursery industry (retail & production); 6 from the landscape industry; 6 from the parks and garden industry; 5 flower growers and 3 turf producers.

The level of education of the participants was generally high with 21 university graduates, 15 TAFE graduates and 7 with high school qualifications. Although all participants were owners or managers of the business, a quarter did not have formal horticultural training. Of the 43 participants, all spoke English although this may not have been their first language.

Most of the businesses employed fewer than 10 full-time staff (27) with 8 businesses having between 11 to 20 staff and 7 with more than 20 full-time staff. One interviewee was retired from the industry. Some of the businesses with less than 10 staff had larger numbers of casual staff; however the preference was for full-time staff. All respondents were united in their assertion to have staff attend training.

Manage the business

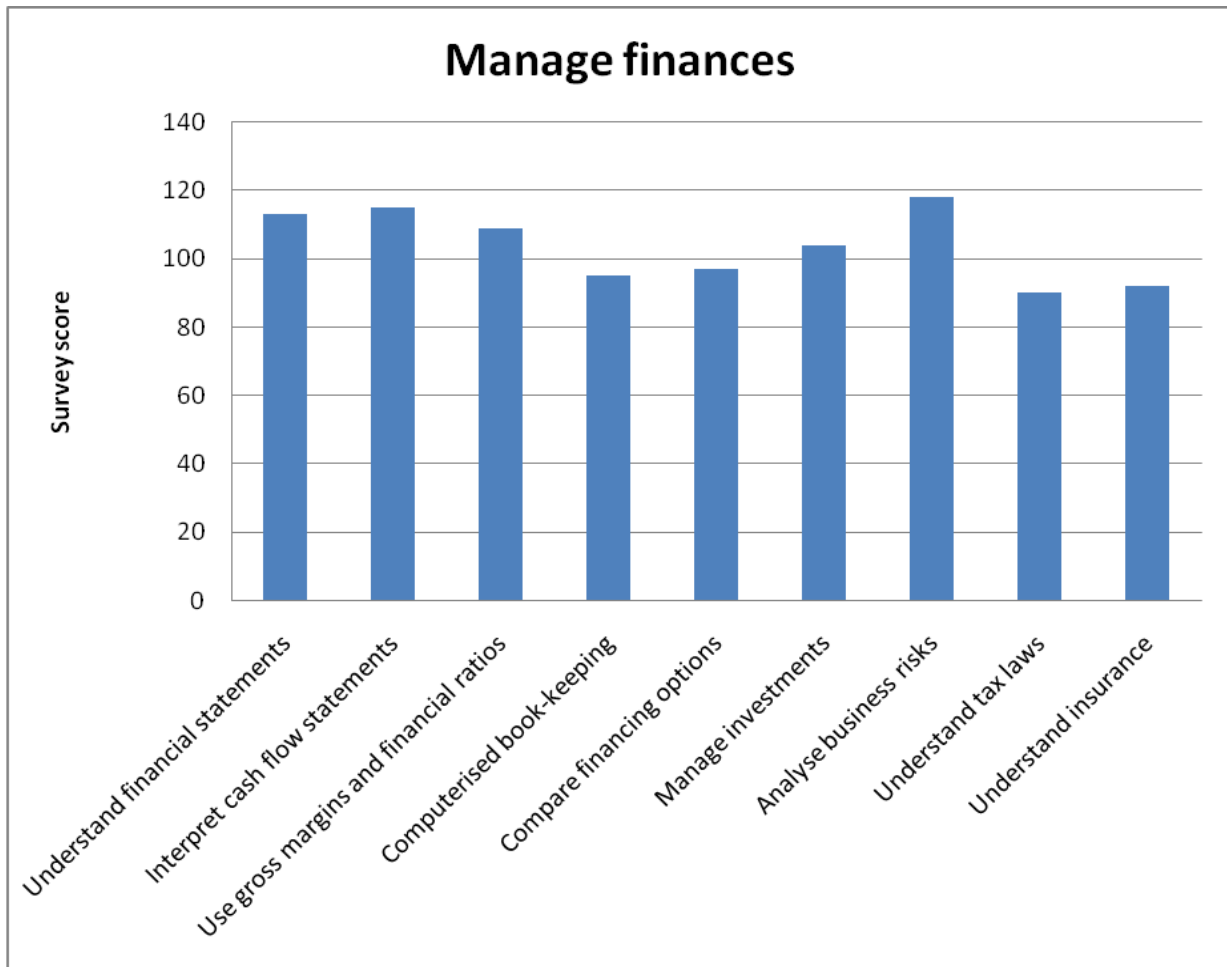
Participants were questioned about their learning needs in relation to their business skills. The highest scores were for analysing and assessing the business and investigating new opportunities. ACLH members were indicating their need to reassess what they are doing in their business to better move forward. Understanding the legal requirements of running a business also rated highly.



Manage finances

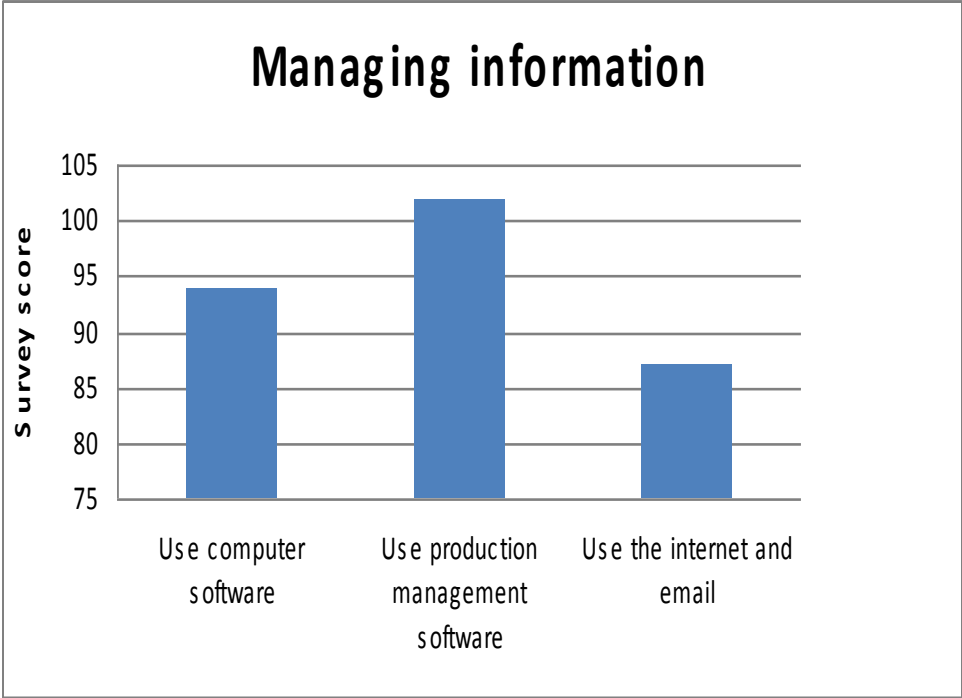
The need to reassess the business was also reflected in the financial skills nominated by the survey. Analysing business risk rated the highest, with the ability to interpret financial supporting this objective. The need for financing options and understanding tax laws was not seen as a priority.

The skill needs for financial management further supports the business management needs mentioned in the previous section. ACLH should plan business training to include business analysis and review and understanding of the financial records in relation to business planning.



Managing information

Skills in managing information rated quite lowly in the survey. Using production management software rated the highest but was quite low compared to other skills in business management.

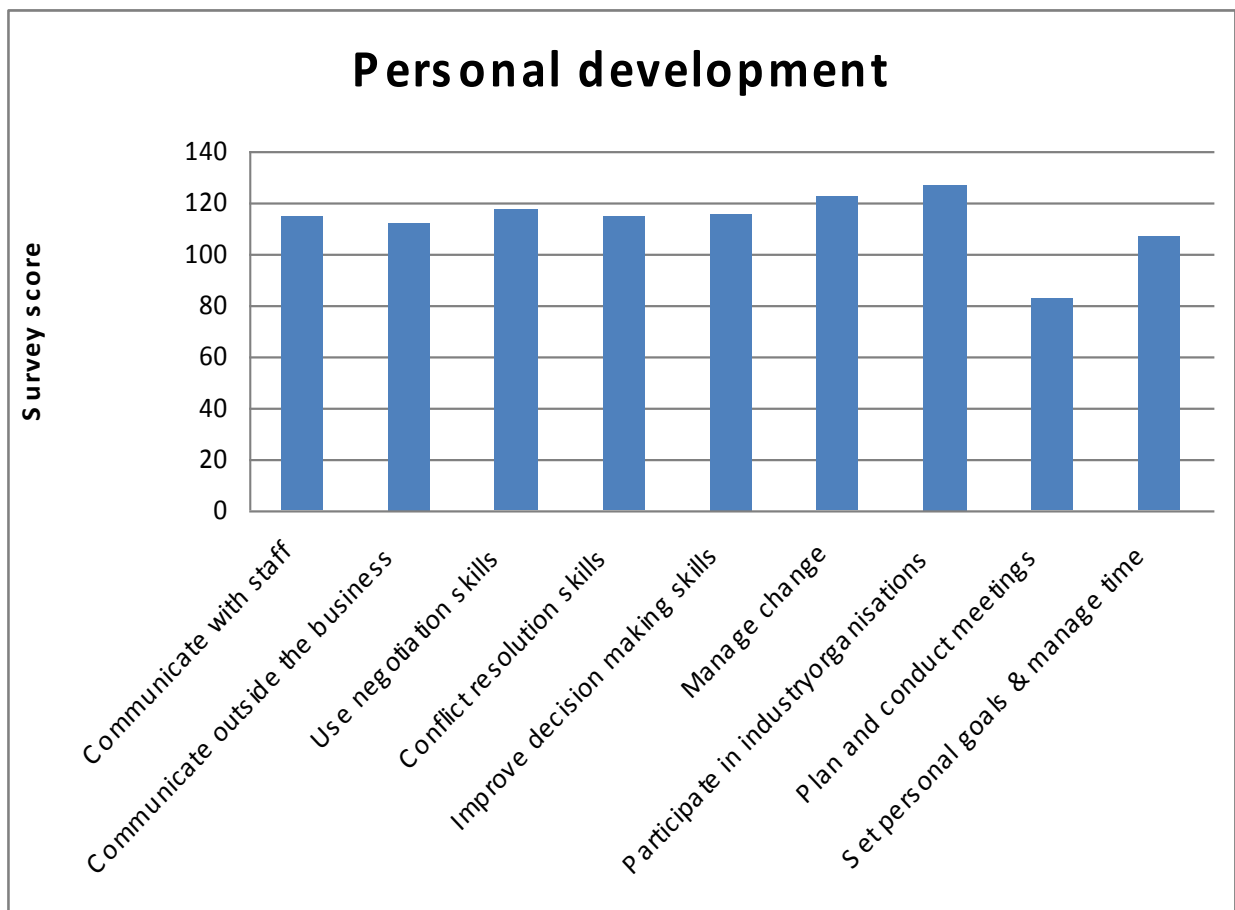


Personal development

Personal development skills were in the main, considered quite highly. Participating in industry organisations rated the most highly and was seen as important for participants. ACLH should explore this need for organisational participation further and encourage members to become involved in the organisation.

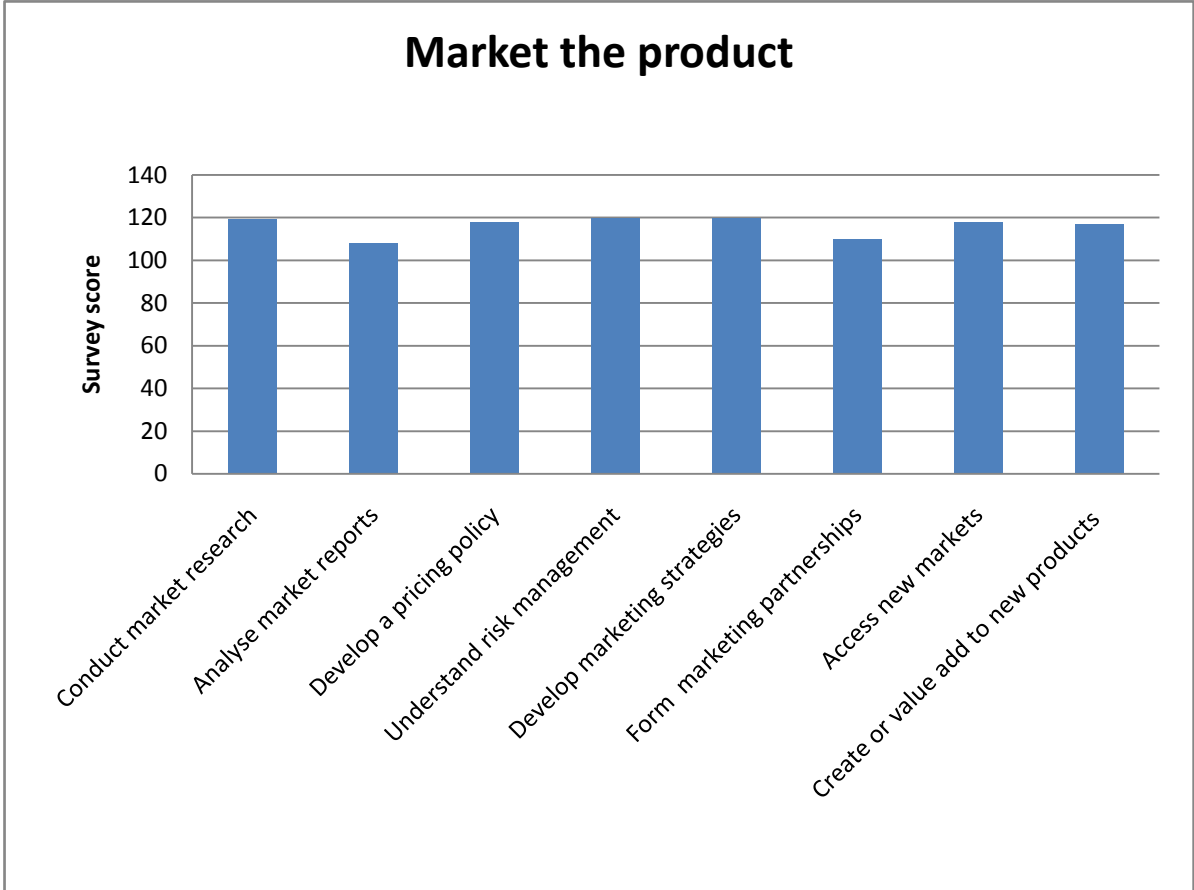
There was a high need for managing change and improving decision making skills which reinforces the needs identified above for analysis and assessment of the business. Members are clearly indicating their need to look at what they are doing and determine the extent to which they wish to change their business.

Personal skills of better communication and negotiation were also highly valued.



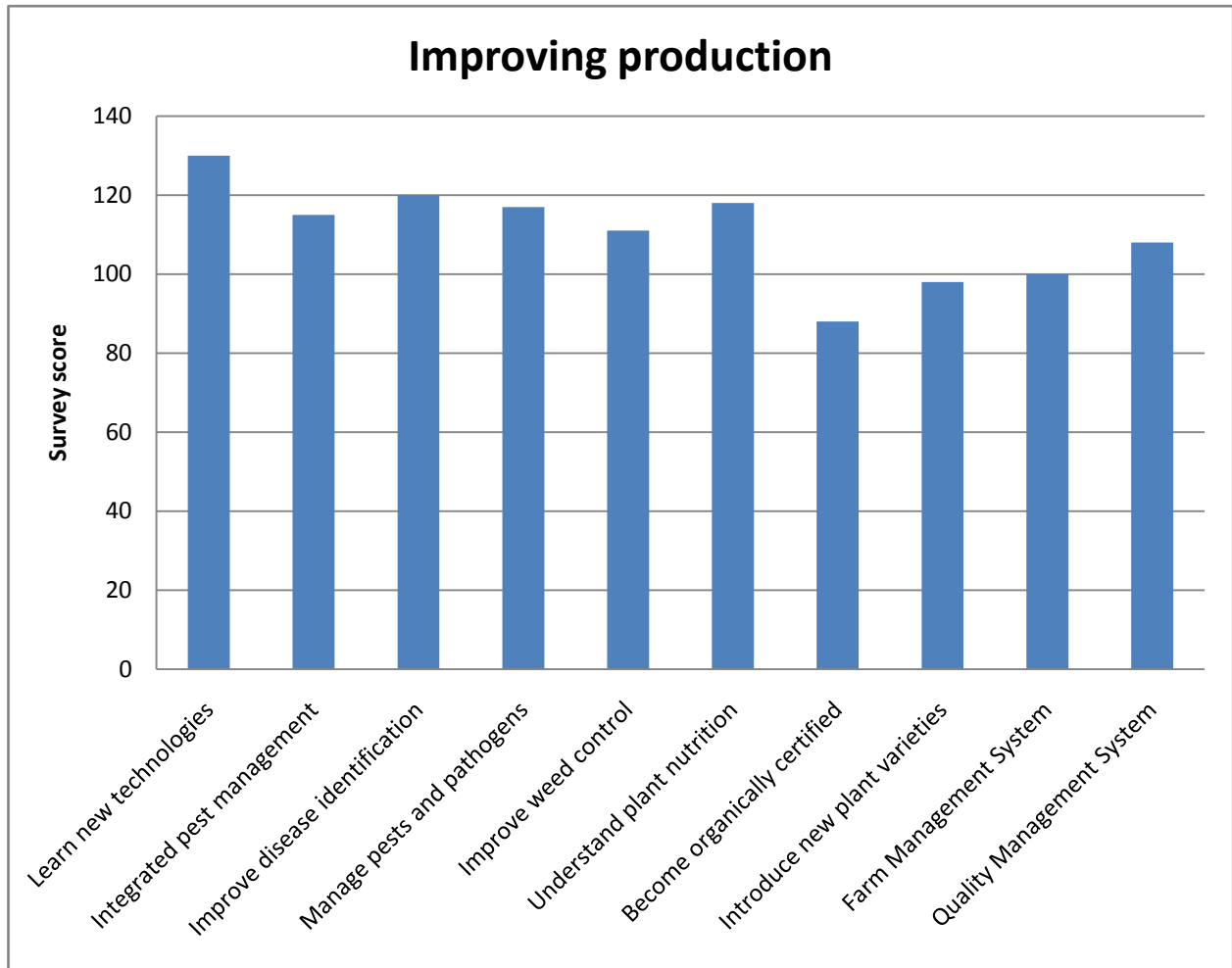
Marketing the product

The need for marketing skills was uniform across the survey. Participants wanted skills in market research, adopting pricing policy, understanding risk, marketing plans and accessing new markets or products.



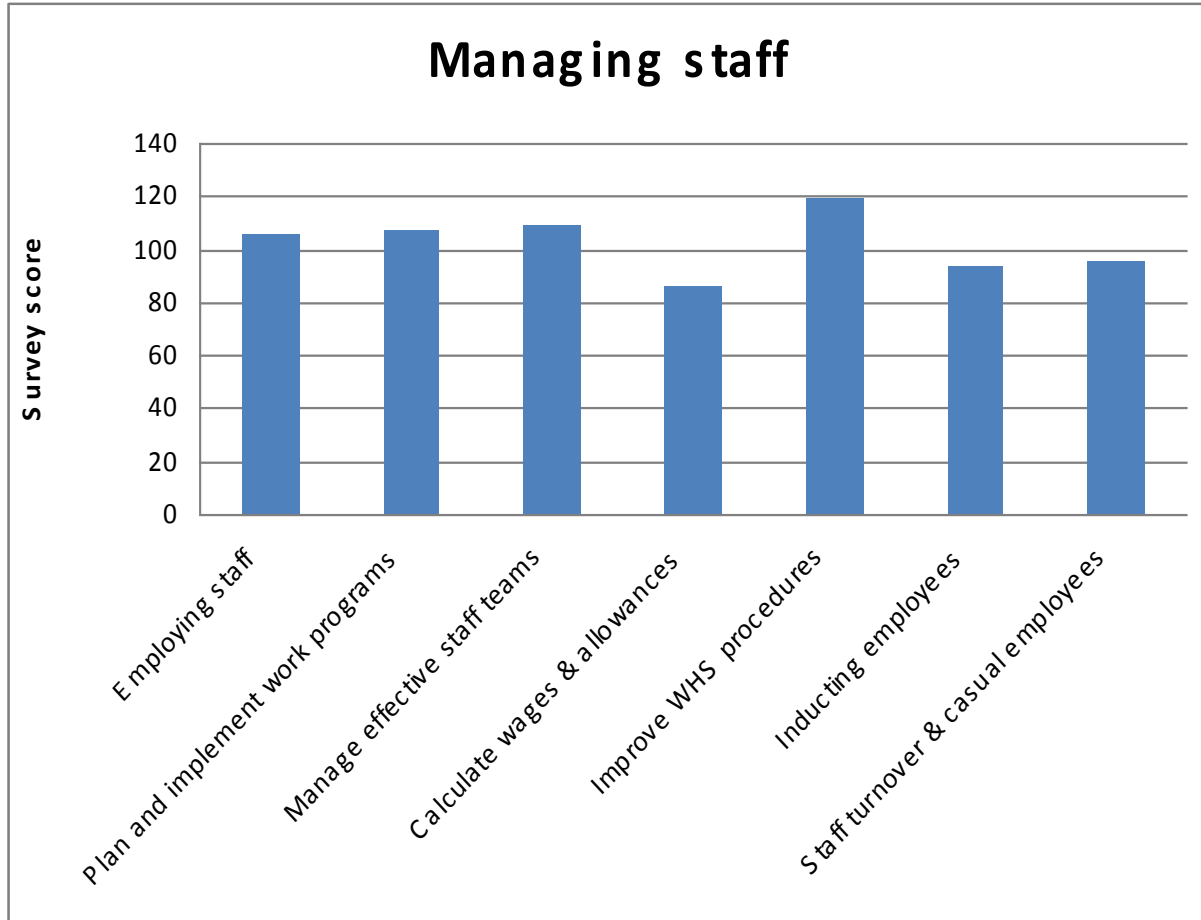
Improving production

The need to reassess the business and look for new opportunities was again reinforced in survey replies to production management skills. Learning about new technologies was the most needed skill identified across all sectors of lifestyle horticulture. Practical skill needs were the identification and management of pests and diseases and more knowledge about plant nutrition.



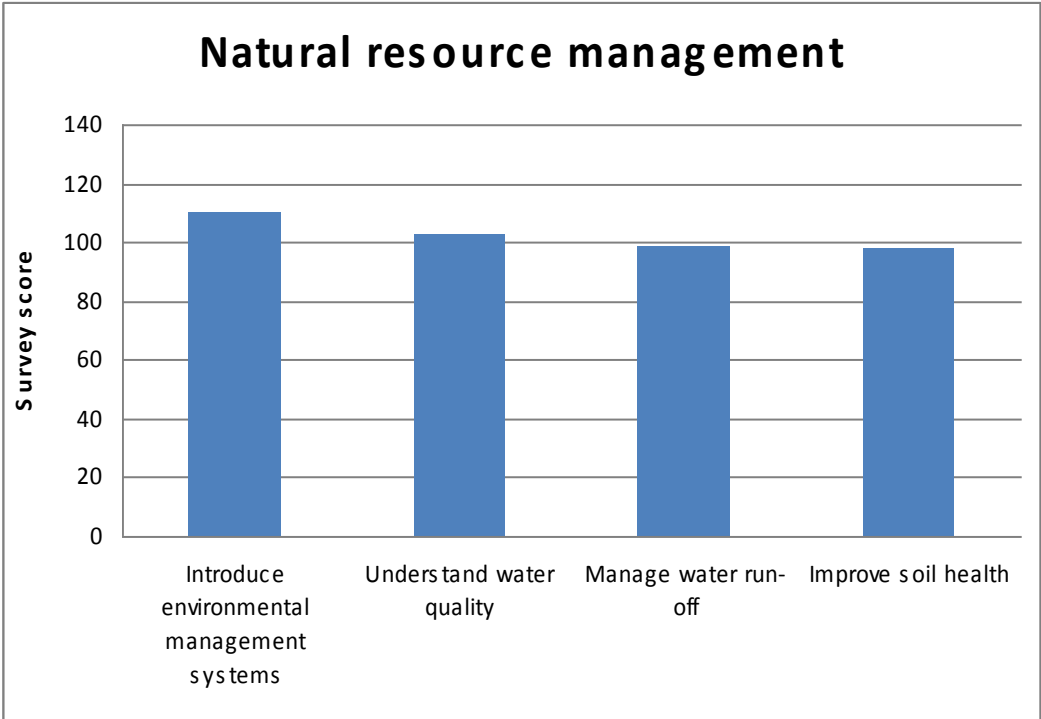
Staff management

Generally, skills in staff management did not rate very highly compared to other needs, although skills in workplace, health and safety procedures were regarded as important. This may result from legislative requirements to meet government standards.



Natural resource management

Natural resource management scored lowly on the survey. Implementing environmental programs was regarded as the most useful skill. This result may have been due to the training and procedures already adopted within the lifestyle horticulture industry to invest in good environmental practices.

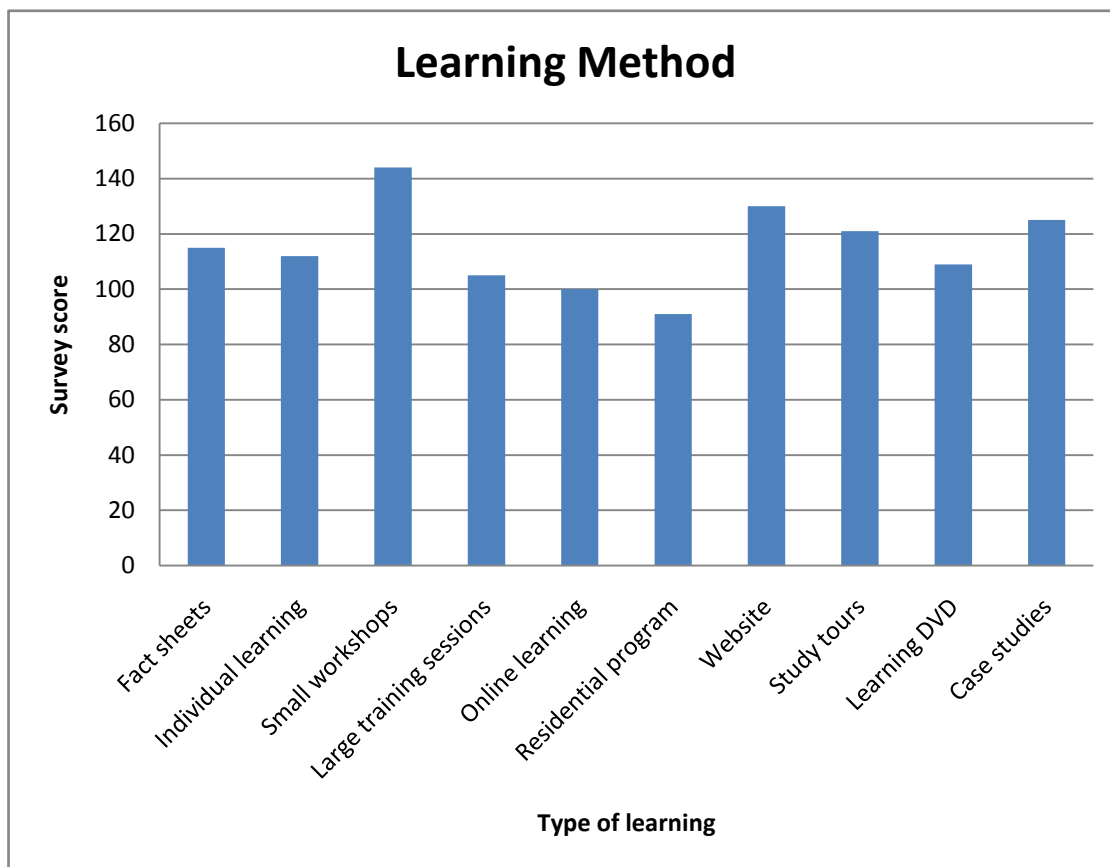


Learning methods

Respondents were questioned about their preferred learning method. Small workshops of less than 10 participants, a website to refer to and case studies of successful businesses were the preferred ways of learning. Study tours to look at other businesses were also regarded as useful.

Members did not want online learning modules but were prepared to look for useful information on the internet as part of their business development. Although online learning did not rate highly, some respondents indicated that they wished to be able to manipulate and use websites for marketing but felt they needed more training in the possibilities of the internet. This provides an opportunity for the lifestyle horticulture industry to provide information on new technologies and case studies of successful businesses as part of their website.

One of the concerns expressed in the surveys was that training can be too expensive and therefore it is difficult to send many staff to training sessions. For regional areas, time is another factor which would influence attendance at training workshops if they need to travel large distances to access training. There was a strong push for training to be presented in regional areas. Conducting regional training could be more cost effective if across sector training in high need areas were conducted. There is a large benefit to be gained from the cross-fertilisation of ideas from each sector at this type of training.



The timing of training was important to industry members. Most felt that a one day course was most suitable length of time. A half day program was the next choice and the group were evenly split on whether this should be in the morning or afternoon. Evening was not regarded as a suitable time. These priorities were spread across the industry sectors with no preference being dominant for any particular group.

An absolute majority of surveys agreed that training programs should be assessable and a certificate of accreditation was regarded as necessary.

Individual industry sectors

Survey results were analysed for individual sectors of the lifestyle horticulture industry and are summarised in the following table. Response averages were collated and any score over 2.8 out of a possible 4 was recorded in the table. The table, therefore, represents the highest needs of each industry sector. Further reference should be made to Appendix 2 for the average scores for all training areas.

The turf industry has indicated a high need for training in a majority of training areas. This result may be affected by the number of surveys conducted with those members but could also reflect strong training needs. This sector should be further researched with a larger sample of turf industry members.

The nursery industry indicated a need for training in business management skills while the flower growers and parks and gardens industry showed a preference for personal development skills. Skills needs for the landscape industry were not strongly preferential for any particular area of training.

The landscape industry indicated a preference for training in business and financial management but overall training rated very low with this industry. Many scores were at the lowest end of the scale. Managing change and assessing business practice were the only areas of identified need. The landscape industry reflected on the need for more apprentices in the industry and suggested more interaction with schools to encourage uptake.

Marketing skills were seen as key issues in the flower growing and nursery industries, while production and agronomic skills were important to flower growers and the parks and garden industry.

Specific sectors of the industry also commented on training needs for their own businesses. Retail nurseries required training in frontline service and merchandising skills, as well as better trained staff who can competently answer customer queries. A suggestion was made for internet based selling courses for the nursery industry.

Learning Skills	Flower	Landscape	Nursery	Parks	Turf
Manage the Business			●		●
Identify and set business goals		●	●		●
Compare and analyse business benchmarks			●		●
Examine, assess and improve your business	●	●			●
Develop a business plan and implement action plan			●		●
Understand the legal side of business	●				●
Explore business structures e.g. companies, partnerships					●
Develop quality assurance systems				●	●
Investigate new business opportunities	●		●		●
Plan business succession					●
Manage Finances					
Understand financial statements					●
Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements					●
Use gross margins and financial ratios					●
Computerised book-keeping					●
Compare financing options					●
Manage investments	●				●
Analyse business risks			●		●
Understand tax laws					●
Understand insurance					
Managing Information					
Use basic computer software e.g. Microsoft Office					●
Use production management software e.g. irrigation					●
Use the internet and email					●
Improving Yourself					
Communicate with staff	●			●	●
Communicate outside the business				●	●
Use negotiation skills e.g. price negotiations	●				●
Develop conflict resolution skills	●				●
Improve decision making skills					●
Manage change		●		●	●
Participate in industry organizations				●	
Plan and conduct meetings					●

Set personal goals & manage time	●				●
Marketing the Product					
Conduct market research for your products			●		●
Analyse market reports			●		●
Develop a pricing policy	●		●		●
Understand price risk management	●		●		●
Develop marketing/ promotion strategies	●		●		●
Form and participate in marketing partnerships	●		●		●
Access new markets	●		●		●
Create new products or value add to existing ones	●		●		●
Improving Production					
Learn new technologies and processes	●		●	●	●
Improve integrated pest management	●			●	
Improve disease identification	●		●	●	
Manage pests and pathogens	●			●	
Improve weed control				●	
Understand plant nutrition	●			●	●
Become organically certified	●				●
Introduce new plant varieties					
Develop and implement a Farm Management System	●				●
Develop and implement a Quality Management System				●	●
Staff management					
Employing staff					●
Plan and implement work programs		●			●
Create and manage effective staff teams					●
Calculate wages & allowances		●			
Improve workplace, health & safety procedures					●
Inducting employees					●
Dealing with staff turnover and casual employees					●
Natural Resource Management					
Introduce environmental management systems	●				●
Understand water quality					●
Manage water run-off					●
Improve soil health					●

6. Outcomes

The Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture has diverse memberships who have a number of across industry training needs. However, sectors of the industry have also expressed the need for specific training for their industry.

While some sectors have specific training courses for their industry, there has been a history of low uptake for currently available programs. Lifestyle horticulture industry members have expressed training needs which are not always catered for by packaged programs.

Development of tailored courses to suit the expressed needs would benefit the industry. Further discussion of meeting training needs with service providers should be instigated by ACLH as industry leader.

There is a need for across industry training in assessing and developing businesses. This was reflected in the high priority placed on assessment and review skills in business and financial management. Responses to marketing and personal development reinforced the need for owners and managers to examine the ways they are conducting their business with decision making and the desire to explore new ideas and technologies.

Comments were made by respondents that they required “Understanding of the cost/benefit for new technology” and wanted to “Quantify the benefit/profit from improved production techniques”. A nursery industry participant expressed the need for “Training in new innovations in nursery industry”.

One respondent was certainly looking for new opportunities in requesting training in foreign languages (Chinese/ Japanese) as a way of opening export markets.

Many participants expressed the need to keep current in their industry. This need can be satisfied by formalised training but ACLH needs to be mindful of the other opportunities available to inform members. The expressed desire to use websites and study tours more fully as part of learning could lead to innovative ways to inform industry. Some suggestions from the surveys were:

- More alerts to industry on relative changes to legislation
- Incorporating new programs such as Farm Management and EcoHort into existing training programs
- Include current issues in training programs so that members are updated on issues such as carbon emissions trading and sustainability
- Establishing email groups to share horticultural knowledge between business owners.

7. Recommendations

From this study of the training needs of members of the Australian Centre for Lifestyle Horticulture, the following recommendations are made.

1. ACLH should develop a holistic business management program that aims to guide businesses in reassessing their business goals and planning. The program should include training in business planning, financial analysis, marketing and operational planning. The program should be based on half or one day workshops, presented across the membership groups to benefit from across industry relationships. The informal mentoring from exposure to other industries would be valuable in relationship building.

It should include sessions for skill development in decision making and managing change, and include skills in negotiation and conflict resolution. The presentation of these workshops should be across regions to allow access by businesses outside south-east Queensland.

2. To complement the larger program outlined above, ACLH should present 2 -3 hour workshops on innovation and business development to include members of all sectors, lead by a professional business analyst. Business mentors from private or government agencies can provide this service.

These programs would be designed to commence a process of rejuvenation in the industry for the many businesses who felt they needed to reassess their business direction and develop new innovations.

3. ACLH should develop a learning program specifically aimed at marketing skills with the flexibility to understand each sector of the industry. Although there are generic marketing skills that could be applied to all sectors, the marketing strategies for flower growers as opposed to landscape consultants would differ. However, there would be value in joint learning sessions for each sector to learn from the successes of other parts of the lifestyle horticulture industry.
4. ACLH should conduct industry tours to other sectors of lifestyle horticulture and other business sectors to examine successful business models. This method was supported in the survey as a valuable tool for learning.
5. The ACLH website should be developed to host case studies of successful businesses and business opportunities. The website could also provide opportunities for industry networking with blogs and forums.
6. Specific training should continue in workplace, health and safety procedures and retail and frontline management across all industry sectors.
7. A larger survey to substantiate the findings in this study is required. It is recommended that this include a labour force study that would examine the baseline skills needed by employees and job descriptions for job roles within the membership group of ACLH.

8. Training strategy action plan

Develop a program of analysis and assessment in business management in the lifestyle horticulture industry through training.

Strategy	Responsibility	Time line	Outcome
Discussion with training service providers to develop tailored programs to meet industry needs	ACLH ACLH Executive Officer	December 2008	Development of customised accredited skill packages
Develop a skills program to incorporate business analysis with inclusiveness of new technologies and practices.	ACLH Industry associations Government stakeholders	June 2009	Quicker uptake of technology, resulting in improvements in efficiency, productivity and quality.
Developing networking opportunities for ACLH members through study tours, online forums and training workshops to create cross-fertilisation of ideas and business practices to develop industry skills	ACLH ACLH Executive Officer Industry associations	June 2009	Education and Training portal in the ACLH website.

Encourage a culture of education and training within the lifestyle horticulture industry.

Strategy	Responsibility	Time line	Outcome
Support the education and training strategy	ACLH Management Committee and Industry associations	December 2008	Written commitment by ACLH management committee.
Allocate budgets for ACLH education and training sub-committee activities.	ACLH Management Committee	June 2009	Annual Budget allocation for sub-committee activities.
Commission a labour force study to examine current skill levels and required skill sets in workforce	ACLH Management Committee	June 2009	Overview of the state of industry workforce and the skill needed to take industry forward

Assist businesses within lifestyle horticulture to customise training programs, for management and staff	ACLH Industry Associations	Ongoing	A highly skilled workforce, equipped to deal with ongoing challenges.
Disseminate information and opportunities for education and training to ACLH members	ACLH Industry Associations	Ongoing	Improved uptake of professional training and quicker uptake of allocated funds for training.
Promote awareness of subsidies, grants and scholarships for training	ACLH Industry associations	Ongoing	Accessible information linked to ACLH website, new schemes promoted in ACLH newsletters.

Appendix 1 Learning & Development Survey

About you	Business Description
Language spoken at home	Postcode
Highest level of education Year 10 Year 12 TAFE University	Nursery – Retail – Production Flower grower Landscape – Design – Production Parks & Garden Turf Arboriculture
Have you previously undertaken training in horticulture?	Number of full-time employees (include permanent part-time as a fraction e.g. ½ for an employee working 20 hours/ week)
Would you or your staff attend training?	Number of casual employees

On a scale of 1 to 4; where **1 is “no interest at all”** and where **4 is “extremely interested”** please rate your interest in knowing more about the following areas:

Business Skills	1Low	2	3	4High
Manage the Business				
Identify and set business goals				
Compare and analyse business benchmarks				
Examine, assess and improve your business				
Develop a business plan and implement action plan				
Understand the legal side of business				
Explore business structures e.g. companies, partnerships				
Develop quality assurance systems				
Investigate new business opportunities				
Plan business succession				
Manage Finances				
Understand financial statements				
Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements				
Use gross margins and financial ratios				
Computerised book-keeping				

Compare financing options				
Manage investments				
Analyse business risks				
Understand tax laws				
Understand insurance				
Managing Information				
Use basic computer software e.g. Microsoft Office				
Use production management software e.g. irrigation scheduling				
Use the internet and email				
Improving Yourself				
Communicate with staff				
Communicate outside the business				
Use negotiation skills e.g. price negotiations				
Develop conflict resolution skills				
Improve decision making skills				
Manage change				
Participate in industry organizations				
Plan and conduct meetings				
Set personal goals & manage time				
Marketing the Product				
Conduct market research for your products				
Analyse market reports				
Develop a pricing policy				
Understand price risk management				
Develop marketing/ promotion strategies				
Form and participate in marketing partnerships				
Access new markets				
Create new products or value add to existing ones				
Improving Production				
Learn new technologies and processes				
Improve integrated pest management				
Improve disease identification				
Manage pests and pathogens				
Improve weed control				
Understand plant nutrition				
Become organically certified				
Introduce new plant varieties				
Develop and implement a Farm Management System				
Develop and implement a Quality Management System				
Staff management				
Employing staff				
Plan and implement work programs				
Create and manage effective staff teams				
Calculate wages & allowances				
Improve workplace, health & safety procedures				
Inducting employees				
Dealing with staff turnover and casual employees				
Natural Resource Management				

Introduce environmental management systems				
Understand water quality				
Manage water run-off				
Improve soil health				

Other training requirements (please specify)

The last part of the survey is to determine the best learning method for you. Rate your preferred learning methods by placing an 'X' in the box for each option.

Learning Method	1 <i>Least preferred</i>	2	3	4 <i>Most preferred</i>
Fact sheets				
Individual one on one learning				
Workshops – (5 – 10 participants)				
Training sessions – (more than 10 participants)				
Online interactive learning				
Residential live-in program				
A website to access information when you need it				
Study tours to other businesses				
DVD to learn at your own pace				
Case studies of successful businesses				

What is the most appropriate length of a learning program for you? (Can choose more than one)

1–2 hours Half day One day Two days Longer

What is the best time? (Can choose more than one)

Morning Afternoon Evening

Would you do assessment and receive a certificate for your training?

Yes No

Appendix 2 Survey results

Score averaged over number of respondents (1 – lowest; 4 – highest)

Learning Skills	Flower	Landscape	Nursery	Parks	Turf
Manage the Business					
Identify and set business goals	2.0	2.9	2.8	2.3	4.0
Compare and analyse business benchmarks	2.2	2.6	3.2	2.7	3.3
Examine, assess and improve your business	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.7	4.0
Develop a business plan and implement action plan	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	4.0
Understand the legal side of business	3.2	2.1	3.1	2.2	4.0
Explore business structures e.g. companies, partnerships	1.4	1.7	1.9	1.8	3.3
Develop quality assurance systems	2.4	1.9	2.5	2.8	3.3
Investigate new business opportunities	2.8	2.4	3.2	2.2	3.3
Plan business succession	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.5	3.3
Manage Finances					
Understand financial statements	2.2	2.6	2.7	2.3	3.3
Interpret cash flow & profit and loss statements	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.3	3.3
Use gross margins and financial ratios	1.8	2.6	2.8	1.8	3.3
Computerised book-keeping	2.4	2.1	2.1	2.0	3.0
Compare financing options	2.2	2.1	2.4	1.7	3.0
Manage investments	2.8	2.3	2.4	1.7	4.0
Analyse business risks	2.6	2.3	3.0	1.8	4.0
Understand tax laws	1.8	2.1	2.2	1.3	3.0
Understand insurance	1.6	1.9	2.5	1.5	2.7
Managing Information					
Use basic computer software e.g. Microsoft Office	2.4	2.6	2.1	1.3	3.0
Use production management software e.g. irrigation	2.4	2.1	2.4	2.0	3.3
Use the internet and email	2.4	1.9	2.0	1.3	3.0
Improving Yourself					
Communicate with staff	3.0	2.4	2.4	3.0	4.0
Communicate outside the business	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	4.0

Use negotiation skills e.g. price negotiations	3.0	2.4	2.7	2.3	4.0
Develop conflict resolution skills	2.8	2.3	2.6	2.5	4.0
Improve decision making skills	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.5	4.0
Manage change	2.4	3.1	2.7	2.8	4.0
Participate in industry organizations	2.2	2.4	1.9	2.8	3.3
Plan and conduct meetings	2.2	1.9	1.7	2.5	2.3
Set personal goals & manage time	2.8	2.4	2.5	2.0	3.0
Marketing the Product					
Conduct market research for your products	2.6	2.4	3.1	1.7	3.7
Analyse market reports	2.4	2.1	2.8	1.7	3.0
Develop a pricing policy	3.2	2.7	2.8	1.7	3.7
Understand price risk management	3.4	2.3	3.1	1.7	3.0
Develop marketing/ promotion strategies	3.0	2.0	3.1	1.8	3.7
Form and participate in marketing partnerships	3.0	1.7	2.8	1.8	3.3
Access new markets	2.8	1.7	3.2	1.7	3.7
Create new products or value add to existing ones	2.8	2.3	3.0	1.8	3.0
Improving Production					
Learn new technologies and processes	3.4	2.7	2.9	3.3	3.7
Improve integrated pest management	3.2	2.1	2.6	3.3	32.3
Improve disease identification	3.2	2.0	2.9	3.2	2.7
Manage pests and pathogens	3.2	2.0	2.8	3.0	2.7
Improve weed control	2.0	2.6	2.5	3.2	2.7
Understand plant nutrition	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.0	3.9
Become organically certified	3.23	1.4	1.9	2.0	3.0
Introduce new plant varieties	2.4	1.3	2.5	2.5	2.3
Develop and implement a Farm Management System	3.4	1.6	2.1	2.3	3.7
Develop and implement a Quality Management System	2.6	2.0	2.5	2.8	3.0
Staff management					
Employing staff	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.4	3.7
Plan and implement work programs	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.5	3.0
Create and manage effective staff teams	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.5	3.3
Calculate wages & allowances	2.4	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.7

Improve workplace, health & safety procedures	2.6	2.9	2.7	2.7	4.0
Inducting employees	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.1	3.7
Dealing with staff turnover and casual employees	1.8	2.0	2.2	2.1	3.0
<i>Natural Resource Management</i>					
Introduce environmental management systems	3.2	2.4	2.4	2.2	3.7
Understand water quality	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.2	3.7
Manage water run-off	2.2	2.3	2.1	2.3	3.7
Improve soil health	1.8	2.6	2.0	2.7	3.7

Appendix 3 Training programs

There are a number of accredited programs available in lifestyle horticultural training. These are presented by public and private training providers.

Certificate I in Horticulture

Certificate II in Horticulture

Certificate II in Horticulture (Arboriculture)

Certificate II in Horticulture (Turf Management)

Certificate II in Horticulture (Landscape)

Certificate II in Horticulture (Nursery)

Certificate II in Horticulture (Parks and Gardens)

Certificate III in Horticulture (General)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Arboriculture)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Parks and Gardens)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Turf Management)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Landscape)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Retail Nursery)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Wholesale Nursery)

Certificate III in Horticulture (Floriculture)

Certificate II in Health Support Services (Grounds Maintenance)

Certificate III in Floristry

Certificate IV in Horticulture (Landscape)

Certificate IV in Horticulture (Parks and Gardens)

Certificate IV in Horticulture (Retail Nursery)

Certificate IV in Horticulture (Turf)

Certificate IV in Horticulture (Wholesale Nursery)

Diploma of Horticulture

Diploma of Horticulture (Landscape)

Diploma of Horticulture (Parks and Gardens)

Diploma of Horticulture (Retail Nursery)

Diploma of Horticulture (Turf)

Diploma of Horticulture (Wholesale Nursery)

Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

There is a range of courses on offer through the Built Environment & Engineering: School of Design.

Bachelor of Built Environment (Landscape Architecture)

Post graduate Studies;

University of Queensland- Gaston Campus (UQ)

Bachelor of Applied Science (Plant Production)

Diploma of Applied Science (Horticulture)

Master of Agricultural Studies (coursework)

Graduate Diploma in Agricultural Studies

Graduate Certificate in Agricultural Studies

Master of Plant Protection (coursework)

Graduate Diploma in Plant Protection

Graduate Certificate in Plant Protection