

AIFT Certification Report

Prepared by Wendy Magahay, Magahay@shaw.ca

Employer: Camosun College, Title: Program Coordinator, Magahay@camosun.ca

Attended AIFT January 2007 in Palm Springs CA.

1. Brief description of the organization, group, or community you worked with.

Zambri's (www.zambri.ca) is an award-winning, bistro-style restaurant in the process of tripling their operations and moving to a new downtown Victoria location. A family-owned business, one of their key strengths is the care and attention given to hiring the right people and providing them with the right training on an ongoing basis. In an industry where employee loyalty is a rarity, Zambri's is highly successful in retaining employees. It is critical to the owners to maintain "the Zambri's way" – a high commitment to customer service and quality – in growing their team and implementing their training. The owners face the daunting task of hiring a significant number of new staff while operating the restaurant and managing the logistics of the move. They also want to preserve the quality and precision of their management in succession planning as their senior staff takes on more responsibility. They are looking for tools and support in recruiting, hiring and training new staff with the skills and attitudes that set Zambri's apart.

2. List the names and/or category of stakeholders you included in the Core Group, the cross-section of people that helped you identify the topic and modify the Interview Guide.

Stakeholders throughout the process included three (3) representatives of management, the six (6) original staff and the twelve (12) new staff. In addition, anecdotal data collected from patrons and friends of the organization was fed into the process.

3. AI Process Summarized

Two sessions were conducted. Throughout both sessions I was supported by Ms Robyn Unwin who was a mentee in the process. Face-to-face paired interviews were used to inquire into exceptionally positive moments.

Overall goals of both sessions were to:

- 1) Experience appreciative inquiry through an appreciative interview, which will move each individual through the discovery and dream phase in the traditional 4-D Model of Appreciative Inquiry.
- 2) Identify the strengths, desires, assets and potential of the shared Zambri's community.
- 3) Dream about potential areas for growth and success.
- 4) Identify strategies to get there.

First session was May 3, 2010 and the initial focus was to develop effective strategies to identify and share "the excellence of the Zambri's Way." Participants were management and the original team of staff. See responses re life-giving forces and what they wanted more of summarized in Appendix A.

Second session was September 2, 2010. Participants were management, original staff and all new hires. See responses re life-giving forces and what they wanted more of summarized in Appendix B.

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Interview Questions included:

- a) BUILDING FROM SUCCESS: Tell me about a time when you were really engaged in and excited about your work. Tell me a story about that time. What was happening? What were you feeling? What made it a great experience? What were others doing that contributed to this being a great moment for you? What did you contribute to creating this moment?
 - b) CONTINUING THE LEGACY: If you had three wishes for the new Zambri's, what would they be?
 - c) BUILDING THE NEW ZAMBRI'S: How will we get there?
 - d) CONTINUING THE DREAM: What will people say about the new Zambri's three years from now?
4. Attach or include the Provocative Proposition(s) the group or organization created from the LGFs.

Through extraordinary hospitality and culinary excellence to become the most frequented restaurant in Victoria. This is now the mission statement of the "new" Zambri's.

5. Impact or Results: What organizational, group or community **attitude, process** or **structure** changes have people made as they move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)?

See Appendix C

6. What will you do to ensure that people continue to move toward realizing the Provocative Proposition(s)? How will you help them gather stories of success? How will you help them celebrate? How will you, as the AI Facilitator, support their ongoing success?

While the formal commitment with the organization has now ended, it is the intent of the organization to weave appreciative questions into all of their staff development programs going forward. I have every confidence that this will become a permanent part of their practice.

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7. What did you wish for in the inquiry? What did you learn from the inquiry about yourself and your facilitation? What was your "personal best" experience related to facilitating the Inquiry?

It was a privilege to assist the group in acknowledging and mourning the loss of one business while moving on to the success of expanding the venture. The personal best was guiding the group to acknowledge in particular the loss of what was. That it was not only okay, but essential to mourn that before they could move on, resentment free, to embrace the new Zambri's.

At the conclusion of the final gathering one of the long-time staff shared that she had thought there was no need or value in what she called "professional development" but having been through the process she felt it was critical to ensuring a shared, positive direction for occasion of the final gathering. One of the new hires shared that while he had spent his entire career in the food and restaurant sector, he had never until now encountered an employer that invested such a significant amount of time on the organization's culture and how most effectively to share it.

8. Have you received permission from the "client" or "clients" to tell us their story? In other words, does Company of Experts.net have permission to share this story with others? If not, who would COE.net need to contact to receive permission?

Yes. Should further information be required, contact: (Ms) Jo Zambri

<http://www.zambris.ca> , info@zambris.ca

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APPENDIX 1: Zambri's Appreciative Inquiry Session: Part 1, May 3, 2010

HIGH POINTS

- ☐ explain and interpret menu for customers
- ☐ confidence in food
- ☐ passion for what we do
- ☐ teamwork – compassion and consciousness
- ☐ staff is valued and 'seen' by customers
- ☐ authentic – walk line between professionalism and friendly connection with customers
- ☐ broad spectrum of customers
- ☐ spirit of "cultivating" customers
- ☐ connections with regulars
- ☐ knowing customers and their tastes
- ☐ staff allowed to be ourselves
- ☐ spirit of 'invitation' to new staff
- ☐ respect for what we do
- ☐ respect for the skills new people bring

WISHES

- ☐ restaurant makes great \$
- ☐ to preserve the spirit of authenticity and cooperation
- ☐ quality environment
- ☐ pride in what we do and how we keep learning
- ☐ patience and respect for customers and educating them
- ☐ more refined
- ☐ attract new customers; retain regulars
- ☐ owners more free from day to day operations
- ☐ camaraderie; excited to come to work and connect with co-workers
- ☐ no fighting
- ☐ bring quality to an even higher level
- ☐ friendly and welcoming to new staff
- ☐ coaching environment
- ☐ employee benefits
- ☐ best pizza in Victoria
- ☐ media / write-ups

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WHAT DO WE NEED TO TRANSFER TO NEW STAFF?

- ☐ orientation to new space
- ☐ know specials and '86 list' before hitting the floor
- ☐ be early
- ☐ in uniform; clean and alert
- ☐ we are 'on' from the minute we walk in the door
- ☐ our knowledge of Italian food
- ☐ how important education is in our business
- ☐ 'I am your mentor – ask me ANY questions you have'
- ☐ continue Wednesday sessions
- ☐ safety of asking for help
- ☐ organization, multi-tasking
- ☐ sharing tips for 10 years; how not to lose that
- ☐ keeping busy ALWAYS
- ☐ treating every table like your own – next time they might be
- ☐ maintain the newness of the space
- ☐ self monitoring; letting people know if they don't pull their weight
- ☐ communication log book as a coaching tool
- ☐ write specials in log book so staff has to look at it
- ☐ have back up plans
- ☐ always do more than you have to
- ☐ new staff need to fit into Zambri's culture; ie. add to it, but not change it
- ☐ no one allowed to fight but Jo and Peter
- ☐ helping people move in the gray areas
- ☐ important to articulate what WILL change from the old to new Zambri's

WHAT DO WE WANT

- ☐ stricter, more structure
- ☐ great communication
- ☐ less interpretation and ambiguity for individuals
- ☐ policies etc. written down
- ☐ maintain FUN!!
- ☐ a place where sincere friendships are the norm
- ☐ considerate workplace
- ☐ more one to one feedback
- ☐ losing staff meal time as shifts will be staggered – how can we maintain that community time?
- ☐ bring answers not just questions; solutions not problems
- ☐ be proactive

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APPENDIX 2: Zambri's Appreciative Inquiry and Mentorship Session: Part 2 (September 2, 2010)

For new hires:

1. Why did you choose Zambri's? What was the reputation?

- Reputation
- Standards of excellence
- Desire to work in the best place possible
- Looking for new challenges
- Food is amazing
- Service is amazing
- Commitment to local food
- The way the kitchen runs
- Liked coming here as a patron
- The smell of the kitchen
- Family aspect
- Authentic food
- Chance to work with people I like
- Consistency of the food
- The passion of the people and the food

For those who've been around:

1. What makes Zambri's great? (are they some of the same things mentioned above?)

2. Share one story when, for you, Zambri's was at its best. The quintessential Zambri's moment (may be the same or different from that you shared in the May session)

3. If you could share one dream for Zambri's with your new colleagues, what would it be?

For everyone:

1. How do we get there?

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APPENDIX 3: IMPACT

The document below is the preface to the new Zambri's staff manual. It summarizes the values and vision that emerged through the AI process and are not fully integrated into the daily operations of the organization. **Note this excerpt is proprietary to the company and is not for further distribution without explicit permission from Zambri's.**

(1) MISSION

Our mission is through extraordinary hospitality and culinary excellence to become the most frequented restaurant in Victoria.

Hospitality is the basis of everything that we do. True hospitality extends beyond good service, good food, or a good wine list. These are just some of the tools that we use to care for our guests as well as our co-workers and the suppliers we use.

(2) OUR PHILOSOPHY OF HOSPITALITY

Hospitality is about making people happy. It's about "delivering the emotional goods". It's the feeling you get when you feel like someone is "on your side". This is conveyed in many ways... the cleanliness of our dishes, the fair price we charge for our products and the care of garnish used on our plates. It exists in the wines that we choose to the "emotional hug" people receive when they enter our front door. Hospitality needs to exist in every area in both the front and back of house.

We live this hospitality not only with our guests, but with the larger community in which we live and do business, and with each other. If we don't feel cared for, we will never want to care for others. This hospitality creates contagious reciprocity and goodwill. The way we are going to do this is to have everyone – from our suppliers to our neighbours, to our guests – want to see us succeed.

(3) OUR PRINCIPLES

These are the **Principles** under which we operate:

Exceptional Hiring – We will seek to attract, hire and train an extraordinary staff that is notable for its friendliness, intelligence, work ethic, empathy and self-awareness.

Empowering our Staff – We will seek to empower each member of our team to take whatever measures are necessary to successfully meet and exceed the very high expectations our guests bring to the restaurant. We should inspire each other to have a reflex for excellence.

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Excellence in Products – We will search for superior food and beverage products, growers and suppliers whose sense of caring and excellence is aligned with ours.

Employee Development and Growth – As a member of the team, we will work with you to develop your personal and professional skills to the highest possible level. We seek to promote from within whenever possible and encourage everyone to advance and grow.

Honest and Constant Communication – Informing you of what is expected of you; letting you know how you are doing in your job through regular performance reviews and coaching; receiving your feedback and suggestions with appreciation; and finally ongoing dialogue about how we are doing as a whole.

Cleanliness and Repair – The physical facility at Zambri's is a beautiful space that was designed with both guests and employees in mind. The more pride we take in the place that we spend our work life, the more others will be inspired to care for that place.

Profit – Profit is the oxygen necessary to breathe life into our business. In the absence of profitability, we are unable to achieve our mission. We believe that creating profit is a shared responsibility and we encourage your resourcefulness and suggestions on how to best improve this profitability.