

30 November 2015

Paige Sinclair
CEO Dolphin Marine Magic
PO Box 532
Coffs Harbour NSW 2450

Dear Paige

As you know, I've now had a research association with the Pet Porpoise Pool-Dolphin Marine Magic for more than 10 years. I want to reflect here on the significant changes that I've observed and studied over that period. My first study in 2005, which covered employees from both marine science professionals and other employee groups, showed a number of distinctive features of the then Pet Porpoise Pool management and operations:

- 1) A very strong focus on animal welfare, almost to the exclusion of other considerations;
- 2) The Dedication of staff to animals and their professional roles with a weaker commitment to the organisation itself;
- 3) A weak focus on customer needs and a lack of concern for customer focus in the organisation;
- 4) A strong division between marine science professionals, including animal trainers, and other supporting staff;
- 5) A lack of effective communication both vertically and horizontally in the organisation;
- 6) A lack of unifying vision and in fact, significant turbulence about the future direction of the organisation.

My most recent study in 2014, involved employees from both marine science professionals and other employee groups and again consisted of interviews with management, a focus group with staff and an employee survey (with a 100 per cent return!!), demonstrated a totally different organisational environment, which can be summarised as:

- 1) A successful and imaginative rebranding as Dolphin Marine Magic;
- 2) A unifying vision, held across all employee groups of a customer focused and commercially competitive organisation;
- 3) A professional environment that is attractive and rewarding and a workforce that is enthusiastic, has a passion for the animals and are significantly more committed to the organisation;
- 4) An increased range of animals curated in a highly professional manner;
- 5) A transformed physical environment with new display areas, new education and entertainment facilities, provision for events such as weddings and a shop area that provides excellent retail amenities;

Underpinning this transformation has been the development of a new board and management structure, creating a flexible, outcome focused management with a strong participative ethos. Staff enthusiasm is evident at all levels, although retention of skilled and experienced staff continues to be a challenge which will be resolved by improving returns on the investment being made in the future of the organisation. The organisation has always been an integral feature of the region's tourism industry but is now playing a greater role in the leadership of regional development on the Coffs Coast.

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The longitudinal perspective of my study shows the transformation of this business from an animal welfare focus to a customer oriented, business success focus, with animal welfare/display/education and environmental health as the central theme. The further development of this business both in terms of physical amenities and presentation and also in terms of linkages with regional and national institutions, including my own university are strategies which will underpin the future of the organisation.

If the trends revealed in my longitudinal study to date continue, Dolphin Marine Magic will play an ever more important role in the future of the region and indeed in the place of aquatic theme parks in Australia and internationally. The ongoing technical animal husbandry strengths will continue to be enhanced and supported by a participative management approach which will continue to engender strong employee commitment and engagement in an innovative, customer focused, commercially successful organisation.

I look forward to my own ongoing, productive research relationship with Dolphin Marine Magic.

Yours Sincerely,



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