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**THESIS
PHD DEGREE IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT**

***From strategic planning to strategy implementation
in the hotel industry in South Africa***

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September 2008



DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It is being submitted on the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Doctoral Degree in Tourism Management to the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination to any other university.

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5th September 2008



ABSTRACT

This study was initiated due to the need to address process of moving from strategic planning to strategy implementation within the South African hotel industry. The idea of strategy implementation might seem straightforward: namely that the strategy is formulated and then implemented. However, transforming strategies into action is a far more complex and difficult task. Numerous impeters hamper this process.

The main deliverable of the investigation was to develop a conceptual and practical strategy implementation model for the South African hotel industry. The intention of the strategy implementation framework was to serve as a tool that assists in the process of moving from strategic planning to strategy implementation.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed for data gathering. The first phase involved five in-depth interviews with executives from three to five star rated hotels. The second phase involved the completion of a structured questionnaire by a sample of 61 three to five star rated hotel managers. Although the data gathering covered the entire strategic management process, there was a specific focus on strategy implementation and the impeters associated with this process within the South African hotel industry.

The data from both the phases were analysed and a draft conceptual and practical model was developed. The intention of the researcher was to present a model that is both user-friendly and easy to understand, as well as practical for use by all levels of management with varying educational qualifications, within the hotel industry. A draft model was subsequently presented during a focus group session to a group of hotel executives, managers and management consultants for review. The discussions focussed on a number of aspects relating to the model, including but not limited to the ease of understanding of the model and concepts and its practicality in assisting hotel practitioners move from strategic planning to strategy implementation.



Based on the discussions from the focus group, a revised and final model was developed.

While the research focussed on the hotel industry in South Africa and therefore its primary application is for the South African hotel industry, further research could be done to investigate the potential application of the model in hotels located in other countries. The model might also be adaptable for use in other service industries.

In addition, the research focussed on developing a model that would assist practitioners in the hotel industry move from strategic planning to strategy implementation. During the research, it became apparent that the need for customised hotel industry specific strategy implementation tools is a niche requirement. However, further research must be conducted to investigate, review and ascertain the availability of management and practical tools that could help hotel managers in the monitoring of strategy implementation and if not, a model or scorecard could be developed, taking into account the idiosyncratic nature of the hotel industry.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Nic Alberts, for his excellent and professional support during the entire journey of this research project. His helpful support, insights and continued encouragement and most importantly patience, every step of the way, made this research project possible.

A sincere word of thanks is also due to Dion and Eric van Zyl, who assisted me in the data gathering and statistical analysis phases.

This research project would not have been possible without the wonderful grace of God, who guided me through rough waters, and kept me focused, granted me the necessary wisdom and taught me the value of perseverance.

“There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD”.

(Proverbs 21:30)



DEDICATION

To NIKKI, a loving and understanding wife who continually and without question supported and encouraged me through the entire programme.

To my son RYAN and my daughter CHARLOTTE, my loving children, who often gave up spending quality time with me to enable me to complete my PhD.

Lastly, to my late MOM and DAD, who taught me the value of hard work and dedication. You will be remembered forever!



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