



# Industry Training Graduations

**What can be done to increase participation levels at  
the Industry Training Graduations?**

## Report

*A strategic goal of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs is:  
To encourage Mayors to host Industry Training Graduations (Action Point 1 - 2009/2010)*

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# Contents

## Overview

Executive Summary	3
Recommendations	5

## Process

Aim of the Research	6
Research Objectives	6
Methodology	6
Participant Recruitment	7
Methods of Data Gathering and Analysis	7
Dissemination of the Data	8

## Research Findings

Emergent Themes	9
Summary of Empirical Data gathered from Event Organisers	17
Key Observations as related to the Research Questions	18

## Appendices

Appendix 1	Event Manager Questionnaire	21
Appendix 2	ITO Questionnaire	22
Appendix 3	Best Practice Guidelines – Event Managers	23
Appendix 4	Best Practice Guidelines – ITOs	31

## **Executive Summary:**

As at January 2010 current participation rates of Industry Trainees attending Industry Graduation Ceremonies range from 17% to 100% but analysis shows these rates vary across industry, location and population size. Given this variation and the associated community benefit to hosting these events, the Mayors Taskforce wishes to identify key factors and activities employed by Event Organisers and Industry Training Organisations which serve to both increase awareness and encourage high participation levels in the graduations. This will help to attain and enhance the goal of enabling successful celebration of local achievement and contribution to workforce development.

Within this context the research aims were:

- 1) To identify the key factors which contribute to high participation levels at the graduations
- 2) To identify solutions to common challenges faced by event organisers
- 3) To provide recommendations and develop a 'best practice' model to enhance event planning, implementation and evaluation.

This summary highlights the findings of the research:

### **Key factors which influence graduate attendance**

- Community awareness of the graduations is the major factor influencing the participation rates for the graduations. Where a graduation has been running for several consecutive years, and has gained a reputation of being a high quality event the participants are more likely to know about the graduation and respond to the invitation in the affirmative. Building awareness of the graduations should therefore be the main priority for everyone involved in the graduations. Promoting the graduations and building community awareness is a responsibility which needs to be shared by both the ITOs and the Local Authorities.
- The quality of the event in one year has an impact on the numbers of people attending in subsequent years as graduates and employers will talk to their peers about the event. If it was perceived to be an excellent event, which both graduates and employers enjoyed, then the graduation will gain a good reputation within the community.
- Continuity of the event organisers is important because once the organiser has developed an understanding of the organisational processes; they can ensure that improvements are made in successive years.
- The graduations need adequate and sustainable funding which will enable them to become an established community event.

### **Influence of the commitment and enthusiasm of the Industry Training Organisations (ITO's) on graduate attendance**

- The ITOs which have the highest participation rate at individual graduations are the ones who actively promote the graduation to their trainees and employers, and which follow-up the invitations to encourage their graduates to attend. The ideal therefore, would be to have all ITOs actively promote the graduations to their trainees.

### **Addressing and improving areas of under-representation**

- Participation rates are much higher for the smaller graduations than the large urban graduations. There are no significant differences in the organisational processes for the smaller and larger graduations. The low participation rate for the large urban graduations is more than likely attributable to a lack of community awareness of the graduations. In the smaller communities, with fewer employers the likelihood of the employer knowing about the graduations is higher. In the large urban centres, knowledge of the graduations would take much longer to be assimilated into the community.

- The format of the larger graduations is more formal and with more graduates attending the ceremonies are less personal than the smaller graduations. This may also contribute to lower graduate numbers because the event puts graduates outside their comfort zone.
- In the big centres, it appears to be much more difficult to get media coverage of the event and practically impossible to get prior coverage, without spending money on advertising or having advertising features (with sponsored advertising). The free community newspapers are generally more interested in human interest stories and it may therefore be better for media promotion to be targeted to these newspapers.
- While all graduations should strive to have at least a 50% participation rate, it may take considerably longer to attain this goal for the large urban graduations and extra funding may be required for these graduations to ensure there is adequate media promotion of the event.
- If it were possible to present the actual National Certificates at the graduations this could serve to have a major influence on participation rates.
- A factor which needs to be taken into consideration when endeavouring to increase the participation rates for the graduations, especially for the large urban graduations, is how many graduates can be accommodated comfortably in one graduation ceremony

**Key “Best Practice” elements to planning, executing and evaluating Industry Training Graduations**

The graduations with a high participation rate each have all or the majority of the following characteristics:

- The same event manager for consecutive years and a good succession plan.
- A Mayor (and Council) who are enthusiastic about the graduation, and who gets involved in promoting the event.
- A sufficient and sustainable level of funding for the event.
- A high quality invitation that is visually attractive and easy to understand.
- A covering letter that goes out with the invitation explaining in more detail what the graduation is about. This includes the Mayors Taskforce Graduation Brochure in the invitation pack.
- Follow-up of the graduates if they do not respond to the invitation. This can be a phone call to the graduate themselves, their employer and by asking the ITO to also follow-up.
- A high level of community awareness of the graduation. By promotion of the event in the community by the Mayor, media, and/or length of time the graduation has been going.
- A consistently high quality event which has gained a good reputation in the community and especially with the graduates’ employers.
- Recognition of the employers at the ceremony in a manner which encourages them to attend in subsequent years and also to spread the news about the graduation to their peers.

## Recommendations

Theme	Description of Issue	Solution and responsibility
<b>Building Community Awareness</b>	Ideally graduates, their families and their employers will be aware of the graduation, have an understanding of what it involves and be expecting the invitation	<p><b>Mayors</b> and councillors to promote the graduation whenever possible.</p> <p><b>Mayors</b> to use media contacts to encourage media to cover the graduations – both before and after.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to develop media packs for their graduation and network with appropriate media representatives. The aim is to have coverage of the event both before and after the graduation. If possible, provide names of graduates for the human interest stories that journalists may follow up – be aware of the privacy act though and get permission from the graduate before doing this.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to place advertisements / community notices in media promoting the graduations.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to also develop an <i>internal</i> communication strategy about promoting the event to Council officers and elected members to build awareness.</p> <p><b>ITOs</b> to actively inform graduates and employers about the graduations and encourage them to attend</p>
<b>Invitation Package</b>	Invitation package needs to be visually attractive, contain all relevant details in a clear and concise format.	<p><b>Event Organisers</b> to re-examine the existing invitation packs and ensure they will attract the interest of the target audience and make sure families and support people are made very welcome.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to ensure all information is included in a clear and concise format.</p>
<b>Quality of the Event</b>	The graduation needs to be perceived by the attendees as a valuable and worthwhile event so they will want to encourage others to attend in subsequent years.	<p><b>Event Organisers</b> to carefully plan all details of the event so it runs smoothly.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to ensure all graduates, ITO reps and other dignitaries know what is expected of them.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to ensure the event honours both the graduates and their employers.</p> <p><b>Event Organisers</b> to fully evaluate the graduation each year and to plan improvements for the following year. The evaluation will ideally include some feedback from participants – especially graduates, employers and ITOs</p> <p><b>Mayors</b> to invite local ITO staff to become part of the planning group and provide constructive feedback to event organisers.</p>
<b>Funding</b>	Sustainable and appropriate levels of funding needs to be sourced to ensure quality events are run	<p><b>Mayors</b> to ensure the graduation becomes an annual budgeted item (Involve CEO and officers).</p> <p><b>Event Organisers and Mayors</b> to decide if external funding should be sourced and develop a plan to undertake sponsorship and community funding applications.</p>
<b>Succession Planning</b>	A clear outline of the organisational process should be available for new event organisers	<p><b>Event Organisers</b> to prepare a Graduation Manual which outlines the organisational process for their graduation and includes resources provided by the National Co-ordinator.</p> <p><b>National Co-ordinator</b> to ensure that all event organisers have the resources to enable them to plan the event</p>
<b>Presentation of National Certificates</b>	Presenting the National Certificate at the graduation would ensure that more graduates attended.	<p><b>National Co-ordinator</b> to undertake a feasibility study on the possibility of presenting the actual National Certificate at the graduations.</p>

## Process

### Aim of the Research:

As at January 2010 current participation rates of Industry Trainees attending Industry Graduation Ceremonies range from 17% to 100% but analysis shows these rates vary across industry, location and population size. Given this variation and the associated community benefit to hosting these events, the Mayors Taskforce wishes to identify key factors and activities employed by Event Organisers and Industry Training Organisations which serve to both increase awareness and encourage high participation levels in the graduations. This will help to attain and enhance the goal of enabling successful celebration of local achievement and contribution to workforce development.

### Research Objectives

- 1) To identify the key factors which contribute to high participation levels at the graduations
- 2) To identify solutions to common challenges faced by event organisers
- 3) To provide recommendations and develop a 'best practice' model to enhance event planning, implementation and evaluation.

### Methodology:

As outlined above, the aim of this project is to examine the current challenges and solutions employed by event organisers in planning and implementing Industry Training Ceremonies which contribute to high participation levels. In analysing these factors a 'best practice' model will be developed and promoted throughout the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs network.

The research team used a 'qualitative' approach to address the research questions:

- What are the key factors which influence graduate attendance?
  - Does the involvement of the Mayor have an influence on graduate attendance?
  - Does availability of funding for the graduations have an influence on graduate attendance?
  - Does the organisational process influence graduate attendance?
  - Does the continuity of both the graduation and event organiser have an influence on attendance?
  - Do employers have an influence on graduate attendance?
  - Does the perceived quality of the graduation have an influence on attendance in successive years?
  - Does marketing and promotion of the graduations have an influence on graduate attendance?
- What influence does the commitment and enthusiasm of the Industry Training Organisations have on graduation attendance?
- How can areas of under-representation be addressed and improved?
- What are the 'key' or 'best practice' elements to planning, executing and evaluating Industry Graduation Ceremonies?

The approach used to conduct this research fell into four phases:

- 1) Scoping, planning and engagement
- 2) Securing participation and conducting interviews
- 3) Analysis
- 4) Reporting and dissemination of the research

## Participant Recruitment

In selecting participants, two groups were targeted: Event Organisers and Industry Training Organisations. The methods of selection varied between these groups given the timeframe of the research project and the need to examine disparate results by location, size and success.

Fourteen (14) of the Thirty one (31) event organisers from 2009 were selected to take part in the research study because their local graduation ceremony either had a significant percentage increase in attendance, had a consistently high percentage attendance over several years or conversely a low percentage attendance.

The following graduations participated in the study. This group represents 45% of all TLAs organising graduations.

Graduation	Reason for Selection
Ashburton	Consistently high level of attendance
Canterbury	Low percentage attendance
Eastern Bay of Plenty	Significant increase in attendance
Grey	Consistently high level of attendance
Hamilton	Significant increase in attendance
Matamata-Piako	Significant increase in attendance
Marlborough	Consistently high level of attendance
New Plymouth	Significant increase in attendance
Otorohanga	Significant increase in attendance
Papakura	Significant increase in attendance
South Waikato	Consistently high level of attendance
Stratford	High level of attendance in 2009
Wairarapa	Consistently high level of attendance
Westland	Significant increase in attendance

Twenty Three (23) participating ITOs were invited to participate. Seven ITOs responded representing a 30% participation rate. Those ITOs which responded were: BCITO, Careerforce, Competenz, ESITO, Hairdressing ITO, Retail Institute and the Sports Turf ITO. These seven encompass large and small ITOs, traditional apprenticeships and non-traditional training, and ITOs which cover only one industry (eg Hairdressing) and those which have a range of industry types for which they provide training (eg ETITO). All of these ITOs are fully committed to participating in the graduations.

## Methods of Data Gathering and Analysis

Survey forms and interviews were used to elicit participants' perspectives and views on the Ceremonies (*Appendix 1 – event organiser survey form and Appendix 2 – ITO survey form*). The questionnaires developed were structured, but allowed for 'open-ended' answers. Interview times ranged from 20 to 45 minutes and participants were also invited to share promotional material and tools used in running their events.

The data gathered from these interviews was then sorted as themes emerged and then analysed accordingly.

### **Dissemination of the Data**

It is the intention of the Mayors Taskforce to promote the findings of the report widely and effectively, and to procure maximum effect for Organisers developing and planning ceremonies in 2010 and beyond. The final report and recommendations will be disseminated at the conclusion of the project to all participating Mayors in the Taskforce, relevant organisations and representatives. This report will be available online from the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs website: [www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz](http://www.mayorstaskforceforjobs.co.nz)

## Emergent Themes

### Community Leadership:

The Mayors of all the communities surveyed are committed to, and enthusiastic about, the graduations. The hands-on involvement of the Mayors is usually restricted to appointing the event organiser, setting a date which fits their schedule, and involvement on the night of the graduation.

For some graduations the involvement of the Mayor is greater. For example, in Marlborough the Mayor sits on the Steering Group and is actively involved in promoting the event on local radio and in the media. In Westland the Mayor and event manager work very closely together in organising the event. In both Otorohanga and South Waikato the Mayor actively promotes the event within the community.

### Funding

All the event organisers who participated in the survey, except Wairarapa, receive funding from the Council to run the graduation. Wairarapa obtains the funding to run the graduation through industry sponsorship. In 2009 Marlborough asked for sponsorship from local businesses and found they were very supportive. The major budget items for the graduation are:

- Venue hire
- Catering
- Staff time.

Costs vary widely for individual graduations as, for example, some have free venues while others pay up to \$5,000 for the hire of the town hall. Some graduations have staff time factored into the cost, for others the staff time is accounted for through their normal job.

Seven of the event organisers commented that the funding for their graduation is a regular annual budget line. One event organiser commented that “no money is easy money”. The funding for the Wairarapa graduation is not secure as it is dependent on community support. Secure and sustainable funding is important for the on-going viability of the graduations around the country<sup>1</sup>.

### Organisational Process

All event organisers had a similar process for organising the graduation. This is: ITOs send graduate data to the event organiser, this information is transferred to one spreadsheet, invitations are sent out and RSVP recorded.

The basic format of the graduations is the same for all graduations. This includes: A Welcome by the Mayor, a speaker, presentation of Mayoral Award to graduates. There are many variations within this basic format as communities develop a ceremony format that works for them.

All event organisers use Excel spreadsheets to record and monitor the invitations and acceptances, but with variations in the actual method used. All event organisers are satisfied that the method they use works well for their graduation.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: In order for Local Authority funding to be consistent, it should be budgeted as part of the Annual and Community Plans. This would mean that as ‘elected’ members change, commitment to promoting the trades and celebrating community success would be on-going.

The majority of the event organisers had concerns about the quality of the information received from the ITOs. In 2009, ITOs were asked to put their graduate data into a spreadsheet template before sending it to the event organiser. Most ITOs used the template but more often than not it was not filled in correctly – information was in wrong columns, information was missing and/or extra information was included. This made for considerable work on the part of the event organiser who had to transfer the data from the ITOs onto their own spreadsheet format<sup>2</sup>.

### **Methods used to encourage graduates to attend**

#### **Invitations –**

- In most cases the invitations are sent to the employment address. This is usually the most accurate address the ITOs have for the graduate. If a graduate has changed employer since finishing their qualification, this is not recorded by the ITOs. This system is not perfect as there are a number of potential graduates for whom there is no current address because they have changed employer since finishing their qualification<sup>3</sup>.
- The majority of event organisers send the graduate's and employer's invitations in one envelope, with a request to the employer to let the organiser know and/or to forward the invitation on if the graduate is no longer working for them.
- One event organiser, from a small graduation, contacts all the graduates or their employers before sending the invitations to ascertain that the information is correct and that the graduate is interested in attending. Invitations are only sent to those interested.
- The invitation for the Hamilton graduation was redesigned for 2009 and made more visually attractive and "classy". The event organiser believes this had a major impact on the numbers of graduates attending. She also thinks it had an impact on the standard of dress at the event.
- For the Otorohanga graduation, the event manager works with the local ITO staff to have the actual National Certificate presented at the graduation along with the Mayoral Award. She believes that having the National Certificate held back and presented at the graduation is a major incentive for graduates to attend<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Follow up of graduates who do not RSVP –**

- Most event organisers endeavour to contact all the graduates who have not responded by the RSVP date.
- Some event organisers contact the employers because they believe that if the employers are enthusiastic about the graduation, they will encourage their graduates to attend. Contacting the employer also serves to identify those graduates who have changed employer.
- Some event organisers contact the ITOs and ask them to follow up with their graduates. Some ITOs do not have the capacity to allow them to do this, but a number are prepared to contact the graduates and encourage them to attend. Those ITOs which do have the capacity for follow-up of graduates would like all event organisers to contact them.
- Some event organisers do no follow-up of the graduates at all – the reasons given for this are:

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<sup>2</sup> Note: Because of this feedback in 2010 the National Co-ordinator is trialling a new system for the data flow if this system works well for the trial group it will be implemented for all graduations.

<sup>3</sup> Note: Once the training is complete, there is no requirement for the ITOs to keep track of the graduates.

<sup>4</sup> Note: This is a very small graduation which makes this an easier undertaking. When asked, other event managers thought that, while a good idea, the logistics of organising for the National Certificates to be presented could be extremely complicated.

- There are a large number of graduates and follow-up would take a considerable amount of time, and the event organiser does not have the capacity for this activity.
- The numbers who do respond are sufficient for the organisation of a successful graduation.
- The event organiser believes that if the graduates wanted to come they would respond to the invitation.
- One event organiser noticed that the graduates she had to contact after the RSVP date, were often the ones who did not turn up on the night even though they said they were coming. This event organiser felt that when they were phoned the graduates said “yes” just to make things easier for themselves but were not really interested in attending.
- Several event organisers commented that in 2009 they had to do less “chasing up” of graduates after the rsvp date had passed than in previous years. This was attributed to both a greater awareness of the graduations in the community and because more ITOs are promoting the graduations to their trainees so the graduates are expecting the invitation and are feeling more comfortable with the concept of attending a graduation ceremony.

One event organiser made the following comment with regard to attendance levels at the graduations: “While it is commendable that the Mayors Taskforce is wanting to increase participation levels to 100% of graduates, this would have a significant impact on the cost of running the ceremony, which would have to be passed on to participants in some way. Likewise, if, in order to obtain the additional levels of participation, our organisation [the Council] was required to significantly increase its efforts, there may come a point where the increase in time and resource commitment would make running the event unsustainable. There needs to be a balance where reasonable resources are committed to obtain acceptable results.”

### **Community Awareness**

Several event organisers of graduations where there was a significant increase in graduate attendance in 2009 commented that they had made no changes to their organisational process and they felt that the increased attendance was due to a greater degree of community awareness of the graduation.

The event organisers of the graduations with a consistently high attendance rate also believed that the level of community awareness of the graduation has a significant impact on the attendance. Two event organisers commented that because their graduation had been running for 4-6 consecutive years, some employers had now had graduates at two or three graduations. This meant that the employer was aware of the graduation and encouraged their graduates to attend. The graduates from these firms would also be aware of the graduation and what is involved.

Several event organisers commented that in 2009 the number of people who rsvp'd was much higher and they did not have to do as much “chasing up” of graduates after the rsvp date had passed.

One event organiser commented that where the ITOs do the follow-up of graduates the attendance rate is much higher. He said that BCITO and MITO are particularly good at doing this. This comment is validated by the statistical data for the graduations.

### **Promotion / Marketing**

The majority of event organisers endeavour to get media coverage of the graduations. This meets with varying success. Most do get an article in the local newspaper after the graduation. One event organiser commented that they find it very difficult to get media coverage because they are a very

small town and the regional paper appears to be disinterested in “good news” from the small communities.

In Marlborough, Otorohanga and South Waikato, the Mayor is actively involved in promoting the event when at functions and/or on local radio. In Marlborough the local newspaper puts out a tabloid each year. This has articles on the graduation as well as general promotion of industry based careers. Some Local Authorities include articles on the graduation in the Council Newsletter - some do this prior to the graduation and others after the event. Some Local Authorities have information on the graduation on their website. Others post information on community notice boards.

Event organisers commented that it is easier to get articles in free community newspapers rather than the large regional newspapers.

A number of ITOs promote the graduations to their trainees and employers. Some put articles in their newsletters; others give all trainees a copy of the Mayors Taskforce Graduation Brochure when they complete their qualification. For some ITOs, the regional staff discuss graduation with the trainees and/or their employers when they visit.

Event organisers from graduations with a significant amount of community promotion felt that this had a positive effect on the attendance because if the graduation is widely known, the graduate’s families are more likely to be expecting the invitation and encourage the graduate to attend<sup>5</sup>.

### **Employers’ Influence on Graduate Attendance**

Most event organisers believe that employers have a significant impact on graduate attendance. These event organisers believe that if the employer is enthusiastic about the graduations they will strongly encourage their employees to attend.

It was felt that one way to raise the level of enthusiasm of employers for the graduations is to ensure that the contribution of the employer to the training is recognised at the graduation. The ITOs believe that recognition of the employer is a very important part of the graduation.

Most event organisers recognise the employers in some way at the graduation. This involves for most, verbal recognition by the Mayor and/or speakers, employer names printed in the programme alongside that of the graduate and/or employer names shown on a slide show as the graduate receives their certificate. One graduation gives each employer a bottle of wine (this is sponsored by a local winery). One graduation invites employers to come up with their graduate when the certificates are presented. Another graduation asks employers to stand up and they are congratulated by applause.

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<sup>5</sup> *Note: While sending the invitation to the employer’s address is the best way to ensure the invitation reaches the graduate, the downside of this is that if the graduate is not enthusiastic about the graduation, they may not tell their family. It is often the family which encourages the graduate to attend. Therefore, promoting the graduation in the community will alert family of graduates to the event and they may encourage the graduate to attend.*

## **Continuity of Graduation and Event Organiser**

The Wairarapa graduation has been running consistently at the same time of the year for 6 years. The event organiser believes this has a significant influence on graduate attendance as the community knows about and is expecting the graduation each year. Many employers have also had several graduates over the years so the “culture” of industry trainees graduating is becoming well established in that community.

Several other event organisers also believe that the continuity of the event has a positive influence of graduate numbers.

The Westland, Papakura and New Plymouth graduations were all in their second year of running in 2009 and had the same event organiser both years. Each of these graduations had a significant increase in attendance in the second year. These event organiser commented that the second time around they felt much more confident about the organisational aspects of the graduation and also felt better able to answer queries from invitees.

Of the 5 event organisers who took over from someone else, 2 were given very little information, one was given a folder with information and the phone number of the previous event organiser who was happy to answer questions and one was given copies of the emails from the previous year. Two of the new event managers had been involved with the organisation of the graduation in some way the previous year, so they had a basic understanding of what was involved before they started.

All new event organisers are phoned by the National Co-ordinator to talk through the process and to ensure they have a good understanding of the reasons for having a graduation. All event organisers are sent the resources developed by the National Co-ordinator and are told they can contact the National Co-ordinator any time they have questions. The National Co-ordinator makes on-going contact with the event organisers, the frequency of the contact varies depending on the experience of the event organiser and the closeness of the graduation.

If current event organisers are not able to continue with this role they all stated that they will ensure the new event organiser is given all the relevant information and the National Co-ordinator will be informed of any changes to event organiser. Some will put together a manual with the procedure and copies of all templates for letters, invitations, certificates, etc<sup>6</sup>.

## **Perceived Quality of the Graduation**

Each graduation has its own character which reflects the local community. The large graduations are, because of the numbers of graduates involved, relatively formal events with the graduates sitting in a group separate from their supporters and ITO representatives and dignitaries sitting on the stage. The smaller graduations are often more informal with graduates sitting with their supporters and more flexibility during the evening. For example for the Matamata-Piako graduation the events team go out to the business before the graduation, take a photo and get a personal statement from each graduate who is then displayed on a screen as the graduate receives their award. For the Otorohanga graduation a video interview of each graduate is prepared at the workplace and shown at the graduation. Some of the smaller graduations frame the certificates. It appears that while the format of the graduation can differ, the key factor of a “high quality” event is

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<sup>6</sup> *Note: the knowledge of the event organiser may not have a direct influence on the number of graduates attending but it does have an influence on the quality of the graduation which in turn appears to have an effect on the numbers attending – see Perceived Quality of the Graduation p13.*

when the participants feel it is a worthwhile and special occasion and where the success of the graduates and the contribution of the employers were celebrated appropriately for the community.

The Marlborough event organiser believes that “going the extra mile” when dealing with graduates and their supporters plays an important part in the participants perception of the graduation, for example she will ensure people with disabilities have seats set aside at the front, and will send out certificates to people who are not able to attend. Another example of this is when one of the graduates at the 2009 Canterbury graduation was profoundly deaf and had a number of supporters from the deaf community the event organiser arranged for a sign language interpreter to be at the graduation.

Because ITO representatives attend a number of graduations they are in a good position to comment on the graduations they attend. The ITOs’ comments on the key factors which contribute to a high quality event were:

- A high standard of organisation
- Good communication between event managers and ITOs, especially with regard to how many graduates were attending and asking ITOs to follow-up on graduates who have not RSVPd.
- A standard format for the graduations and clear expectations of the ITO involvement in particular what is expected of them on the night.
- Recognition of the employer and the part they play in training is very important. The more the employer is recognised at the graduation the more they will want to attend encourage their graduates to attend.
- Good speakers make for a good event.
- Good numbers of graduates attending
- A good level of formality at the event, which contributes to the perceived worth of the graduation for the participants.

ITOs comments on factors which contributed to a graduation being perceived as “not high quality” were, for them:

- Wrong ITO name on the programme and wrong ITO name used when the graduates were called up.
- An appearance of disorganisation.
- Entertainment that they felt was inappropriate
- ITO representatives not part of the presentation of certificates.

All event organisers aim to hold a high quality event and assess the graduation each year. The type of assessment varies and can include the event organisers talking about what went well and what needs to be improved for the next year or a written evaluation by the event organiser which is submitted to a steering committee and/or a Council department. Some event organisers ask participants for their comments, either informally straight after the event or employers and graduates are selected randomly for more formal feedback.

When an ITO has involvement in a steering committee for the graduation, they are involved in the assessment of the graduations. Usually the only avenue for feedback on the graduations by the ITOs is through the National Co-ordinator. One ITO initiated a meeting with an event organiser when there was an aspect of a particular graduation they did not like. Several ITOs said they would like to be part of the regular assessment of the graduations.

## **Industry Training Organisations' involvement**

### **From the event organisers perspective**

For some event organisers' involvement with ITOs is limited to the sending and receiving of graduate lists and making queries about these. For others, such as Wairarapa, the event organiser has an on-going relationship with the ITOs as part of their job, so contact with ITOs about the graduation is substantial. For some ITOs the graduate lists are either compiled by or checked by local ITO staff.

Contact with each ITO also varies according to how the ITO sends the information out to the event manager.– When the information comes from the ITO National Office and there are no local staff, contact by the event organiser with the ITO is usually limited to emails about graduate information and who will be representing the ITO at the graduation. For the ITOs where the local officers prepare and send the graduate lists, the contact between the ITO and event organiser is usually much greater.

Some event organisers make a point of contacting all local ITO staff, others do not. Mostly this is due to time constraints on the part of the event organiser, especially when organising the graduation is only a small part of their normal job and/or their job normally involves no contact with the ITOs.

### **From the ITO perspective**

26 of the 40 ITOs take part in the graduations. For those that do not participate, the reasons include: industries which have a considerable number of seasonal workers who have usually moved on before the graduation, a large number of trainees who are enrolled for low level or part qualifications, industries where the working life of the trainees does not fit the norm – thus making it extremely difficult for graduates to attend graduations. Each of the ITOs in these categories organise their own graduations that suit their industries.

All those ITOs which now take part in the graduations are committed and willingly spend time and effort identifying the graduates for each graduation. The amount of effort the ITO can put into the graduations is often dependent on their size. The larger ITOs with regional staff in most cities are able to commit more time than the smaller ITOs with fewer or no regional staff and less physical resources.

All the ITOs which responded to the survey place a high value on the graduations.

None of the ITOs which responded contribute funding to individual graduations. The main reason cited was 'if they contributed to one graduation they would be expected to contribute to others, and they do not have the capacity for this to be sustainable'. In 2009 some ITOs did start contributing financially towards the National Co-ordinator's contract. This was organised directly with the Mayors Taskforce.

All the ITOs which responded have regional staff. However, the regions they cover vary widely. Some ITOs have staff in all major cities/districts but for others the areas the regional staff have to cover can be as large as the South Island<sup>7</sup>.

Most of the ITOs do not have direct contact with their trainees once they have completed their qualification. This makes it difficult for them to ensure that the data they send to event organisers is

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<sup>7</sup> *Note: Some of the smaller ITOs which did not respond to the survey, do not have any regional staff – all their work is conducted from one National Office.*

accurate. Two ITOs do keep in touch with trainees to encourage them to do further qualifications. This on-going contact does ensure that their graduate data is accurate. One ITO rings all potential graduates to find out if they are interested in attending the graduations before sending through the graduate lists to the event organisers.

### **Factors which adversely affect graduate attendance**

Because the graduations are held only once a year, and industry trainees are completing their qualifications at different times throughout the year, those who finished their training early in the time period for inclusion in the graduation have often “moved on”. This can be a physical moving to another job, town or country, or it can be an emotional “moving on” in that by the time the graduation happens they do not feel the need to celebrate something that was finished so long ago.

In 2007 the New Plymouth graduation ceremony included a street parade of graduates. The participation rate for 2007 was very low for this graduation. In 2009 with no street parade, the participation rate was much higher which suggests that many graduates did not like the idea of putting themselves in the public eye.

Based on comments from graduates when contacted with regard to attending the graduation, one event organiser noted that some graduates definitely do not want to be involved, either because they are too shy, too staunch or too “can’t be bothered”.

Fear of the unknown can also be a barrier to graduate attendance. One event organiser noted that where there were several graduates from one firm they were more likely to attend than if there was only one.

One event organiser noted that because most industry trainees are given their actual National Certificate either through the post or by the ITO before the graduation, they see less value in attending the graduation. This event organiser believes that if the National Certificates were presented at the graduation this would be a major incentive for graduates to attend.

## Summary of Empirical Data gathered from event organisers<sup>8</sup>

Graduation	# Of year's graduation has taken place?	# Of years the current event manager has organised?	Same Event Manager for 2010?	Funding sources	2009 statistics Graduates invited / those attending and Percentage	% Increase / Decrease from 2008
Ashburton	5	5	Yes	Council	35 / 98 36%	-3%
Canterbury	6	1	Yes	Council & some sponsorship	172 / 1039 17%	-1%
Eastern Bay of Plenty	4	2	No	Council	36 / 85 44%	No data from 2008
Grey	2	2	No	Council	21 / 46 45%	0%
Hamilton	3	3	Yes	Mayoral Budget	216 / 544 39%	+15%
Marlborough	4	3	Hopefully	Council, Local Businesses and Trusts, NMIT	73 / 177 41%	0%
Matamata-Piako	3	1	Yes	Council plus ticket sales to guests.	47 / 104 45%	+33%
New Plymouth	2	2	Yes	Council	100 / 298 33%	+16%
Otorohanga	4	4	Yes	Mayors Special Fund, NMIT	3 / 3 100%	+100%
Papakura	2	2	Yes	Council	10 / 20 50%	+29%
South Waikato	3	3	Probably	Mayoral Fund	14 / 32 44%	No data from 2008
Stratford	2	1	Yes	Mayoral Budget	13 / 15 86%	No data from 2008
Wairarapa	6	6	Possibly	Charitable Trusts / Local Businesses	34 / 68 50%	+13%
Westland	2	2	Yes	Council	7 / 7 100%	+58%

<sup>8</sup> Note: For those graduations with less than 20 graduates (e.g. Otorohanga, Stratford and Westland), the fluctuation in the percentage attendance from year to year is much greater because an increase or decrease of one or two graduates affects the percentage by a significant amount. For example Otorohanga had a 100% increase in attendance in 2009 over 2008 but the difference in actual graduate attendance was only three (3).

## **Key Observations:**

### **What are the key factors which influence graduate attendance?**

It would appear that community awareness of the graduations is the major factor influencing the participation rates for the graduations. In communities where the graduation has been running for three plus consecutive years, and it has gained a reputation of being a high quality event the graduates, their families and employers are more likely to know about the graduation, be expecting an invitation and respond to the invitation in the affirmative.

Building awareness of the graduations should therefore be the main priority for everyone involved in the graduations. Promoting the graduations and building community awareness is a responsibility which needs to be shared by both the ITOs and the Local Authorities. Apart from the graduates themselves, the main group of people to inform are the employers who have, or are likely to have graduates. If the graduations are also promoted in the general community, family and friends will encourage the graduates to attend.

Most event organisers make some contact with the graduates who do not respond to the invitation or ask the ITOs to make contact with the graduates. Some, however, do no follow-up and still have a high graduate attendance rate. Follow-up of graduates therefore appears to be less important than building the knowledge of the graduations within the community. Event organisers may need to be prepared to follow-up graduates until the graduation becomes an established community event, and expect that the need for follow-up will become much less over time.

The quality of the event in one year has an impact on the numbers of people attending in subsequent years as graduates and employers will talk to their peers about the event. If it was perceived to be an excellent event, which both graduates and employers enjoyed, then the graduation will gain a good reputation within the community.

Continuity of the event organisers is important because once the organiser has developed an understanding of the organisational processes; they can ensure that improvements are made in successive years. An experienced event organiser will also have the knowledge and confidence to “go the extra mile” for participants. If the event organiser is not able to continue in the role, they need to ensure the new event organiser is well briefed – preferably by being left a procedure manual. The National Co-ordinator should be informed well in advance of any changes to event organisers so contact can be made and help given to the new person.

The graduations need adequate and sustainable funding which will enable them to become an established community event. Ideally the budget allowed for the event should include an adequate amount for marketing and promotion within the community. The funding also needs to be of a sufficient level to ensure the event is of a high quality. If funding is insecure or inadequate this would have a negative influence on building community awareness and therefore have a negative influence on the graduate attendance.

### **What influence does the commitment and enthusiasm of the ITOs have on graduate attendance?**

Some ITOs, for various reasons have declined to be part of the Mayors Taskforce graduations. For those who are involved the graduations are viewed as an important event and they commit staff time and resources to providing graduate data. There are varying levels of involvement however, usually dependent on both the number of graduates and the number of regional staff an ITO has. Some ITOs simply provide a list of graduates to event organisers. Others promote the graduations through newsletters, websites, etc. Others encourage their staff to be actively involved with the

organisation of the graduations and/or to “chase-up” graduates who do not respond to the invitations.

The ITOs which have the highest participation rate at individual graduations are the ones who actively promote the graduation to their trainees and employers, and which follow-up the invitations to encourage their graduates to attend. The ideal therefore, would be to have all ITOs actively promote the graduations to their trainees.

### **How can areas of under-representation be addressed and improved?**

Participation rates are much higher for the smaller graduations than the large urban graduations vis. Canterbury 17%, Otago 21%, Wellington 29% compared to Matamata-Piako 45%, Papakura 55%, South Waikato 86%, and Wairarapa 50%. Hamilton at 39% in 2009 went against that trend (they identified that a new invitation in 2009 had a significant impact on attendance). There are no significant differences in the organisational processes for the smaller and larger graduations although generally the larger graduations do not undertake any personal follow-up of graduates after the RSVP date. Usually ITOs are asked to follow-up their own graduates for the larger graduations – either as a request direct from the event organiser or as a general request from the National Co-ordinator.

The low participation rate for the large urban graduations is more than likely attributable to a lack of community awareness of the graduations as their organisational processes do not differ significantly from the smaller graduations. In the smaller communities, with fewer employers the likelihood of the employer knowing about the graduations is higher. In the large urban centres, knowledge of the graduations would take much longer to be assimilated into the community.

The format of the larger graduations is more formal and with more graduates attending the ceremonies are less personal than the smaller graduations. This may also contribute to lower graduate numbers because the event puts graduates outside their comfort zone. Given the numbers of graduates involved in the larger graduations, it would not be possible to have PowerPoint presentations with comments and photos of each graduate or individual video interviews. Event organisers need therefore to ensure the graduates and their employers are collectively honoured and the short time each graduate is on the stage to receive their Mayoral Award is made special – this could be as simple as having the Mayor say a few words of congratulation and encouragement to each graduate and a photo being taken of the graduate with the Mayor.

In the big centres, it appears to be much more difficult to get media coverage of the event and practically impossible to get prior coverage, without spending money on advertising or having advertising features (with sponsored advertising). The free community newspapers are generally more interested in human interest stories and it may therefore be better for media promotion to be targeted to these newspapers.

While all graduations should strive to have at least a 50% participation rate, it may take considerably longer to attain this goal for the large urban graduations and extra funding may be required for these graduations to ensure there is adequate media promotion of the event.

If it were possible to present the actual National Certificates at the graduations this could serve to have a major influence on participation rates. Given the complexity of the graduations and the timing of graduate completions, this may not be a practical option. The feasibility of this would need to be discussed with ITOs, NZQA and event organisers. The logistics of how to make this work in a way that was feasible and did not require extra work for either ITOs or event organisers would need to be fully investigated.

A factor which needs to be taken into consideration when endeavouring to increase the participation rates for the graduations, especially for the large urban graduations, is how many graduates can be accommodated comfortably in one graduation ceremony. If, for example 50% of the 1,039 graduates who were invited to the Canterbury graduation wanted to attend, this would raise a number of significant logistical problems.

### **What are the key “Best Practice” elements to planning, executing and evaluating Industry Training Graduations?**

The graduations with a high participation rate each have all or the majority of the following characteristics:

- The same event manager for consecutive years and a good succession plan.
- A Mayor (and Council) who are enthusiastic about the graduation, and who gets involved in promoting the event.
- A sufficient and sustainable level of funding for the event.
- A high quality invitation that is visually attractive and easy to understand.
- A covering letter that goes out with the invitation explaining in more detail what the graduation is about. This includes the Mayors Taskforce Graduation Brochure in the invitation pack.
- Follow-up of the graduates if they do not respond to the invitation. This can be a phone call to the graduate themselves, their employer and by asking the ITO to also follow-up.
- A high level of community awareness of the graduation. By promotion of the event in the community by the Mayor, media, and/or length of time the graduation has been going.
- A consistently high quality event which has gained a good reputation in the community and especially with the graduates’ employers.
- Recognition of the employers at the ceremony in a manner which encourages them to attend in subsequent years and also to spread the news about the graduation to their peers.

Specific Best Practice Guidelines developed from the experiences of event organisers over the last few years and from this research are attached in Appendix 3

# Appendix One

## Questionnaire for Event Managers:

### Preamble:

The current rates of attendance and participation by Industry Trainees attending Graduation Ceremonies ranges from 17% to 100%. These rates vary across industry, location and population size. Therefore, as a means to lift participation levels in all communities who are planning and implementing future Graduation Ceremonies the Mayors Taskforce wishes to assess critical 'success' factors and 'challenges' in order to develop a 'best practise' model. Ideally, the Mayors Taskforce would like to see 100% of invited graduates attending each graduation in order to acknowledge and celebrate their achievement. Obviously, this will take some time to effect change but sharing the good ideas and practise will positively impact numbers and community awareness across the country.

### Your involvement:

You have been selected to specifically ascertain what you do when organising your graduation ceremony. To simplify the process I have set out a table below for you to complete and return by email. In addition, I would also like to speak to you in person to delve a little deeper into some of the information you have provided. The phone interview would take approximately ½ - ¾ hour.

### Key dates:

I am required to have all of the interviews completed before 29 January 2010. Therefore, is it possible to have the form returned by 18 December and an indication of a suitable interview time for me to call. I will then send back an appointment request and call you then. (I will be working up to 23 December and will around all January – so should be able to do the interviews at a time that suits you best.)

### Questions:

1. How many years have you personally been the event manager for your graduation? Will you be the event manager in 2010?
2. How is your graduation ceremony funded? (E.g. Rates, sponsorship, community funding?)
  - a. Do you have any difficulties getting the money needed to run the graduation?
3. Please give a step by step outline of your process for organising the graduation.

These are areas of particular interest:

  - a. Community Leadership: The involvement of the Mayor in the process
  - b. Monitoring: The Invitation and RSVP process – including how you work your spreadsheet to keep track of who is coming.
  - c. Contact with graduates and their employers- what contact methods do you use and frequency?
  - d. Marketing: Media promotion of your event
  - e. Relationship and Contact with ITOs (particularly local representatives but also at national level
  - f. Assessment: What kind of assessment do you do to critically analyse performance and achievement of outcomes?
4. If you took over the role of event manager from someone else, what information were you given by that person (files, verbal, etc).
5. If you will be handing the job over to someone else, what information will you give them?
6. What other comments would you like to share?

Please supply a copy of your invitation, and any other documents you send out as part of the invitation package (preferably in electronic form).

## Appendix Two

### Questionnaire for ITOs

#### Preamble:

The Core Group of the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs see the Industry Training Graduations would like to see 100% of invited graduates attending the graduations. They have asked me to undertake some research into what ITOs and Event Managers can do to bring this about. I would appreciate if someone from your ITO could answer the following questions related to the graduations and return the completed questionnaire to me before 29 January 2010.

#### Questions:

1. What value does your ITO put on the participation of your trainees in the Mayors Taskforce graduations?
2. Does your ITO contribute funding?
3. From your ITO's experience of attending graduation please give examples of what you would consider to be "Best Practice" – please comment particularly on those aspects of the event which to your mind would have an impact on the numbers of graduates attending.
4. Please give examples of any parts of any graduations that you consider to have been Which graduation would you consider to have been the best in 2009? Why?
5. Which graduation would you consider to have been the worst in 2009? Why?
6. What information does your ITO give your trainees about the Mayors Taskforce graduations? When and how is this distributed? (Please send samples of what you give out preferably in electronic format.)
7. Do you give any information about the graduations to the employers? If yes, what do you give them when is it given to them and in what format? (Please send samples preferably in electronic format)
8. Once your trainees have completed their qualification, does your ITO have any further contact with them – particularly with regard to the graduations and encouraging them to attend? If yes, what contact to you have?
9. Does your ITO have regional staff? If yes, where are they based and what area do they cover?
10. Do your regional staff actively encourage potential graduates to attend the graduations? If yes, how do they go about this?
11. If no, would they have the time to do so in the future?
12. Is there a time of year which would suit your graduates better for a graduation (eg are the majority of your trainees completing their qualification in, say, November, which would mean that a graduation early in the year would be best)?
13. Please can you supply figures and/or a graph showing the number of trainees who completed their qualification for each month of 2008. (If possible just include those who gained a qualification for which they were intitled to attend a graduation.)
14. Do you participate in a 'de-brief' with the organising group to assess the performance and achievement of outcomes? If yes, do you think this is helpful? If no, why? And would you like to?
15. Do you have any other comments you would like to share?

## Appendix Three

### Industry Training Graduations Best Practice Guidelines – 2010 Event Managers

Key Areas	Sub-Sections	Task	Priority
Planning	Event Organiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organising a graduation is a skilled job, and the event organiser needs to have the time and commitment to undertake this task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential</li> </ul>
	ITOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ITOs are an essential part of the graduations and where possible it is good to have them involved in planning the event.</li> <li>Contact all the local ITO representatives for your region. Invite them to be part of the planning process –as members of your steering group if you have one, or invite them to an initial planning meeting. Ideally, the invitation to be part of the planning should come from the Mayor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential</li> <li>High</li> </ul>
	Date and Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no set time for industry trainees to finish their qualification so the graduation can be held at the time of year which best suits your community.</li> <li>Talk to the National Co-ordinator before finalising the date to ensure there are not clashes of dates with major graduations and to ensure there is sufficient time for the ITOs to get the graduate information out.</li> <li>Evening graduations work best. Try to avoid evenings when graduates may be working late nights or when there are major community events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential</li> <li>Essential</li> <li>Essential</li> </ul>
	Mayor's Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the Mayor is available on the scheduled date for the graduation and that it is given a high priority in his/her diary.</li> <li>If your graduation covers several Local Authorities, ensure all the Mayors are able to attend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential</li> </ul>
	Venue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The venue you choose will depend on the size of your graduation. This can be a difficult decision for the first graduation as you will not know how many people will be coming.</li> <li>Be prepared to change the venue if you have to.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Essential</li> <li>Low</li> </ul>

	<b>Photographer</b>	<p>It is a good idea to have a photographer at the ceremony. You will want them to take photos of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The graduates as they receive their certificates</li> <li>• Groups of ITO reps and their graduates</li> <li>• Family groups and/or photos of families with the Mayor(afterwards)</li> <li>• General photos of the ceremony</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Catering</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinks and nibbles either before or after the graduation are nice and allow people to mix and mingle.</li> <li>• This is a major expense and is not essential if you don't have the budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Budget</b>	<p>Make sure the budget is set before you start planning the graduation as the money you have available will determine what you do. Key areas to include in the budget are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venue Costs</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Printing and Stationery (invitations, programmes, certificates)</li> <li>• Technology (hire, support, development of data shows, etc)</li> <li>• Event organiser's fee (if you contract someone to do this specifically)</li> <li>• Photographer</li> <li>• Entertainment (optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Funding &amp; Sponsorship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important that the Local Authorities involved in the graduation contribute significantly to the cost (monetarily and/or in kind)</li> <li>• You may want to get sponsorship for the event from local organisations. Contact the National Co-ordinator for the Sponsorship Package.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Low</b></li> </ul>
<b>Invitations</b>	<b>Invitation Pack</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The invitation needs to be visually attractive and include all the information required clearly and concisely.</li> <li>• Include the Mayors Taskforce logo on invitations</li> <li>• Include a covering letter which highlights the details of the graduation.</li> <li>• Include the Mayors Taskforce Industry Training Graduation brochure with all graduate and employer invitations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitations are sent to the employers address. The ITOs will provide only this address (unless there are particular reasons for sending the invitation to the home address.)</li> <li>• The best way to ensure the invitation reaches the graduate, especially if they have changed employer is to put both the employer’s and the graduate’s invitation packs in the same envelope with a covering letter to the employer asking them to forward the graduate’s invitation if they have moved on. Also ask the employer to let you know if the graduate has left their employment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Who to invite</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduates and their families/support people</li> <li>• Graduates’ employers. Send a specific invitation to the graduate’s employer rather than relying on the graduate to invite them.</li> <li>• ITO representatives. Some ITOs will let you know who is going to represent them at the graduation. For those which don’t, send an invitation to the CEO asking them to nominate a representative if they are unable to attend themselves.</li> <li>• Key people from your district – eg, Polytechnic CEO and appropriate staff, school principals, staff from any group apprenticeship schemes or similar you have in your district, Chamber of Commerce personnel, Employers Assn personnel, etc. Check with the Mayor as to who should be invited if you are not sure.</li> <li>• Councillors and appropriate Council staff – eg Chief Executive, Economic Development Manager, Community Development Manager, etc</li> <li>• Jan Francis, Executive Officer, Mayors Taskforce for Jobs</li> <li>• National Co-ordinator</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
<b>RSVPs</b>	<b>Graduates &amp; Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The follow-up you do with those who have not responded to the RSVP will depend on the size of your graduation and the numbers who have responded.</li> <li>• If possible try to make contact with all graduates and/or their employers who have not responded and encourage them to attend.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>ITOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ITOs are invaluable at helping to get the message out about the graduation to graduates and encouraging them to attend. Contact the local staff (if there are any) or the National Contact person and ask them to follow up any of their graduates who have not responded to the invitation.</li> <li>• As early as possible after the RSVP date, let the ITOs know how many of their graduates are</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>

		attending (or at least give them an indication of probable numbers) so they can make decisions on who will attend to represent their ITO.	
<b>Promotion</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the graduation widely well before it takes place – the more information you can get “out there” the more likely you are to get a higher percentage of graduates and employers along to the graduation. Put together a Media Pack about the graduation. The more information you provide the media the more likely they are to use it – especially if it is in a format where they can use the information without changing it. Include high quality photos with captions.</li> <li>• If you can, get the permission of some graduates who you can profile to the media.</li> <li>• Place articles about the graduation in the Council newsletter, Chamber of Commerce Newsletter or other appropriate media.</li> <li>• Endeavour to get your local community newspaper to run a feature article on the graduation/graduates. (Often the employers of graduates and some ITOs are willing to put an ad in to cover the costs of the feature.)</li> <li>• Encourage the Mayor and Councillors to promote the graduation on Radio or at appropriate meetings.</li> <li>• Develop an information package for Council staff about the graduation and ways they can promote it in the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> </ul>
<b>Event Format</b>	<b>Mayor’s Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have more than one Mayor involved in the graduation, make sure they each have a significant part to play – e.g. a speech, handing out certificates, the welcome, the close, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>ITO Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure ITO reps are well looked after at the graduation (ie they know where they are to sit and what they are to do, etc)</li> <li>• Have the representatives come on stage to shake their graduates’ hands along with the Mayor.</li> <li>• If you don’t have reps from all the ITOs you could get the guest speaker or other VIP to fill in.</li> <li>• It is good to introduce the ITO rep as they come forward – saying, for example – Joan Grace CEO of PrintNZ will congratulate the PrintNZ graduates on behalf of the ITO.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>MC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A quality MC is one of the major keys to a successful graduation. The MC needs to be able to create the right atmosphere of formality and celebration, be able to adapt quickly if there are any last minute changes and to call the graduates up at a good speed, which gives them time in the spotlight but which also keeps up the momentum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with your MC to ensure they are fully cognisant with the programme and the ethos of the event.</li> <li>• Have your MC read out a little information about each ITO before their graduates come up. With so many ITOs involved there will be people in the audience who are not aware what industries they all cover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Speakers can make or break the graduation. The best speakers to have are those with a motivational message – something that says “Well done! – now go on and achieve even more.”</li> <li>• Ensure any speakers at the Graduation (including the Mayor) are aware that the graduates are made up of a range of ages, both genders and come from both trade and service industries. (Some speakers have been very young people, bloke and/or traditional trades oriented which has made the service industries, older graduates and women uncomfortable.) You need to be sure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the guest speaker is a good public speaker and can keep to time.</li> <li>○ understands the nature of the graduation</li> <li>○ understands the nature of industry training</li> <li>○ can relate to the audience (which is very wide ranging)</li> <li>○ has a good motivational message to impart</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Seating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seating arrangements will depend on the size and formality of your graduation.</li> <li>• When deciding the seating arrangements you need to consider the ease with which graduates will be able to get out of their seat and up to the front.</li> <li>• Decide also, where you are going to have the ITO reps seated – on stage, in a group or with their graduates. This will depend on the size of your graduation and your overall seating plan. You need to consider the logistics of enabling the ITO reps to get to the front easily when their graduates are being presented with their certificates.</li> <li>• If the graduates are going to be sitting in a block (this is essential if your graduation is large), develop a process for ensuring the graduates are seated in the right order so the actual presentation of certificates runs smoothly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allocating the graduates a number works well. They then line up and file into the auditorium in numerical order. (make sure you take the number away from them before they go on stage)</li> <li>○ Having the graduates name on their seat works well also (although you do need to be</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>

		<p>careful that there are not too many gaps of the “No-shows”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An usher or two to guide the graduates as they are coming on stage helps for the larger graduations</li> </ul>	
<b>Recognition of key sectors</b>	<b>Employers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure at least one speaker (preferably the Mayor) refers to the importance of the employers to the training process, the success of their graduate and the building of the local economy.</li> <li>• Show employers names on the programme alongside their graduates and/or read out employers’ names when graduates come forward.</li> <li>• A nice touch, if you have the technology and not too many graduates, is to have the employers’ names on a PowerPoint display as the graduates are coming to get their certificates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Whanau/Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the support of whanau/families is recognised and honoured as they often put significant effort into ensuring the graduate completes their qualification. (Remember - this is not just parents but also spouses and sometimes children depending on the age of the graduate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>ITOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise the ITOs as essential partners in the graduations – they are the ones who write and administer the qualifications and without their involvement there would be no graduates or graduations.</li> <li>• Acknowledge the presence of ITO representatives, especially any Chief Executives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
<b>Printed Material &amp; Technology</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show employers names on the programme alongside their graduates and/or read out employers’ names when graduates come forward.</li> <li>• Include the Mayors Taskforce logo on the programmes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Certificates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no set format for the certificates, design something that represents your community. If you are stuck for ideas, the National Co-ordinator has samples of certificates.</li> <li>• Include the Mayors Taskforce logo on the certificates.</li> <li>• Ensure the qualifications are correct on the certificates. If you are not sure, contact the ITO national contact person to check.</li> <li>• Have a number of blank certificates on hand in case people turn up without having RSVP’d. (This happens quite a lot.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
	<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the Council’s, ITOs’, and sponsors’ logos on a PowerPoint display as people are coming into the auditorium.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the ITO logo on a screen at the back of the stage screen as the graduates from that ITO are receiving their certificates. The ITOs are more than willing to supply their logos for you – contact the national contact people for these.</li> <li>• Display the graduate’s name and Employer as they come forward. You could also include some information about the graduate if you have the time to collect this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> <li>• <b>Medium</b></li> </ul>
<b>On the Night</b>	<b>Registration Desk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a Registration Desk for graduates. (This is essential if you have a large graduation.) Registering the graduates on the night ensures you know who is there, in case some people turn up who have not RSVP’d – and there are always the “no-shows” on the night. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The desk needs to be somewhere where there is sufficient room.</li> <li>○ It needs to be easily identifiable and easy for graduates to find (especially if there are a lot of people arriving)</li> <li>○ You need to have sufficient people manning the desk to ensure the graduates are processed smoothly.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• For smaller graduations the registration process can be much less formal but it is essential that you know who is present and if there are any “no-shows” or “extras”.</li> <li>• Once you know which graduates are definitely in attendance, you need to ensure the MC knows this also and only calls out the names of the graduates who are present (nothing is worse than the MC reading out name after name and those people not being there.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
	<b>VIPs and ITOs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all participants (graduates, employers, ITO reps, invited guests, VIPs, etc) know where and when they are to assemble and the format for the graduation. How you do this will depend on the size of your graduation and your budget. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sending out an information pack to participants once they have RSVP’d is the ideal, but there are often the “stragglers” who are late to reply so you need to work out how to get the info to them. Plus this adds to the cost of your graduation.</li> <li>○ With a smaller graduation it may work best to ring/email each participant to let them know what is happening.</li> <li>○ Giving people information when they register on the night also works.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Of course, there are always those who don’t read or follow instructions so you will need ushers on the night to direct the lost or confused.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to evaluate your graduation so you can make improvements the next year.</li> <li>• Ask the ITOs who were present to provide you with feedback. Invite them to the de-brief</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>

		<p>meeting if you have one. The ITO's input into the graduation is important as they are key partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to some of the participants, either on the night or phone them afterwards to get their feedback.</li> <li>• Keep a record of the evaluation so you can refer to it when planning the next graduation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High</li> <li>• Essential</li> </ul>
<b>Succession Planning</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure there are clear guidelines for future event organisers to enable a new person to take over if necessary.</li> <li>• A procedure manual which includes the National Co-ordinator's resources, templates of invitations/letters/etc, VIPs to invite, and all other relevant information would be a good idea.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential</li> <li>• High</li> </ul>
<b>The 'Do Not' Area</b>	<b>Information on Graduates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not give out information on graduates to any other organisation. The ITOs give us the information on trust that it will only be used for the purposes of organising a graduation. (A sponsor of one graduation wanted names of graduates so they could send information about their organisation direct to the graduates. The compromise the event manager came to with the organisation was that they were able to put brochures about their organisation with the programmes on the night and have a stand where people could talk to them before and after the graduation.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential</li> </ul>
	<b>Naming Rights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not give naming rights of the graduation to any sponsors. The graduations are a Mayors Taskforce for Jobs initiative and it is important that they remain clearly identifiable as this. (Major sponsors can be given a high profile on the night and in any information sent out but not naming rights.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential</li> </ul>

## Appendix Four

### Industry Training Graduations Best Practice Guidelines – 2010 Industry Training Organisations

Key Areas	Task	Priority
<b>Promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the graduations to your trainees and their employers by:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Articles in your newsletters with photos of some of your graduates</li> <li>○ Giving each trainee a copy of the Mayors Taskforce Graduation Brochure either when they sign their training agreement or when they complete their qualification.</li> <li>○ Have regional staff talk to employers and trainees about the graduations when they go on their regular visits.</li> <li>○ Event organisers may ask you to consider placing an advertisement in an advertising feature or providing information on your ITO. If at all possible, please respond positively to these requests as the more the graduations are promoted within the communities the more graduates are likely to attend.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
<b>Planning Involvement</b>	Where possible, allow your local staff to be involved in steering committees and/or initial planning meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
<b>Graduate Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep your graduate and employer database up to date to ensure the information given to the event organisers is as accurate as possible.</li> <li>• Provide a complete list of graduates for each graduation to the National Co-ordinator within the time frame specified for each graduation.</li> <li>• Ensure all graduate information is put into the <u>Graduate Information Template</u> provided by the National Co-ordinator.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> <li>• <b>Essential</b></li> </ul>
<b>RSVPs</b>	Liaise with the event organisers to find out which of your graduates have not responded to the invitations and, if possible, contact those graduates to encourage them to attend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>
<b>Involvement in the event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the National Co-ordinator and/or event organisers with your ITO logo so these can be given to event organisers for use on PowerPoint presentations, programmes, certificates, media releases, etc.</li> <li>• Organise for someone to represent your ITO at each graduation where you have graduates. Most event organisers ask the ITO representatives to come to the stage when their graduates are being presented with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>

	the certificates. Usually the Mayor presents the certificate and the ITO representative congratulates the graduate as well. This does vary between graduations. The event organiser should contact you to let you know how many graduates are coming. They will also let your representative know what is expected of them on the night.	
<b>Sponsorship and support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible provide some financial support to these events. The inclusion of funding will ensure your ITO is given appropriate and demonstrate commitment to the graduates and the wider community.</li> </ul>	• <b>High</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide constructive feedback to the event organisers and/or the National Co-ordinator on the graduations. Event organisers would like to hear the positive points about their graduations as well as any areas for improvement.</li> <li>• Where possible, allow staff who attended the graduation attend the de-brief meeting (if one is held).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High</b></li> <li>• <b>High</b></li> </ul>