

Nearly 500 students met their future business

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On 17 March 2011, this year's Service Economist Conference was held in Odense, Denmark. At this occasion, 479 students from Service Economist Educations across the country had the opportunity to meet the 15 business representatives who had stands at the conference.

"We can now allow ourselves to call it a tradition, and I dare to promise that we will meet again next year too", the director of Southern Tourism, Peter Saabye Simonsen said, when he opened the Service Economist Conference, which has been held every March since 2009. The team behind the conference has differed over the three years. This year, Lillebaelt Academy together with Lotte Marie Roesgaard from Comwell Hotels, Malene Friis from Arp-Hansen Hotel Group and Hanne Nehmer from BDP Partners were the leading forces in the planning the conference.

The vision of the conference, however, has remained unchanged since it was first held. All three years, despite changing organisers, it has been the desire to connect the students and the service industry, which has motivated the organisers. The same motive also inspires the many sponsors to make this conference a reality without any costs for the students or their educational institutions.

Furthermore, the organisers also take this opportunity to offer new knowledge to the students through presentations from some business representatives. This year, among other things, the students could learn how to attract good event and ensure its success. They were also presented with examples of two companies' successful work with corporate values, which has created a foundation for a high level of quality and service.

Career, internships and networking

The conference offers multiple perspectives for both students and business representatives.



The conference is a chance for the students to get a glimpse of the industry to which they train. However, it is also a possibility to obtain contacts which can ensure their internship or become useful for career purposes. The students expressed a very positive perception of the conference. They appreciate learning about the different fields of the business and their own career opportunities. "The Service Economist Education is a broad education, so it is nice to get an alternative and more practice-oriented perspective on the possibilities", as one of the students puts it.

As for the business representatives, they may focus on meeting potential interns and potential future employees. Malene Friis from Arp Hansen Hotel Group is one example of this. She brought a concrete list of available internships in the group, and says: "I have met several interesting candidates among the students". Furthermore, she finds the students' investigative attitude very positive, because the conference is an obvious opportunity for the companies to build a network with potential competent employees.

Another purpose may be supporting the Service Economist Education and, at the same time, learning more about it. In general, the business agrees that they need the education in order to ensure future quality and development.

Finally, it is an opportunity to profile your company to a highly relevant audience. It was part of the reason why ConferenceCare, an event organiser from Copenhagen, was present at the conference. "We want to make ourselves visible and create awareness of our existence", Camilla Müller from ConferenceCare says. The company is, however, also pleased to receive interns from the education. Camilla Müller explains: "We want to raise the quality level within the business by imprinting both the education as well as the students – through our participation in this conference and the interns we receive in our company".

We want your competences!

This was a clear message to the students from both the exhibitors and from the four speakers, who the conference program included. One of these four speakers was Lotte Marie Roesgaard from Comwell Hotels. She emphasised that, despite the financial crisis, the need for trained staff is high. "We are fewer people running faster for less money" Lotte Marie Roesgaard begins while, at the same time, emphasising how development of new technology is changing the way e.g. meetings are conducted. These characteristics of the business emphasise exactly the need for skilled and quality conscious staff. This can be explained by the fact that the consumer's choice of supplier is based on the values, the supplier company is built on – the values which provide the good feeling! And the values derive from the people behind the company. As expressed by one of the other speakers, CEO of Odense Zoo Henrik Lehmann: "The beauty comes from within. It is people, who create the experience - not the product itself.



Another Success

The Service Economist Conference 2011 was a successful follow up to the previous conferences, not least due to the fact that the number of participants had almost doubled compared to last year's conference. The conference project manager and lecturer at the Service Economist Education in Odense, Lone Iversen, says, "I was rather excited about handling the large number of participants, but everything went really well - not least due to the talented team of service economist students from Lillebaelt Academy, who had volunteered as 'conference guides". Lone Iversen has also received excellent feedback from the participants. "The speakers have been lauded for giving good, relevant and educational presentations. We ourselves have been lauded for our hospitality and great kindness in the reception of all these people". Alice Petersen, the second project manager of the event, speaks about this year's conference and says: "The support to the conference is very positive. It represents a wonderful conclusion to a rather large piece of work, into which we have put much effort". She concludes by stressing the wonderful feeling of meeting the positive and very professional students.

See you in 2012?

As Peter Saaby Simonsen said, we dare to promise that we will meet at the Service Economist Conference again in 2012. The strong interest surrounding this year's conference provides incentive enough to repeat the success a fourth time. The organisers of the conference hope for an even larger number of business representatives next year. In particular, there is a specific request for more representatives from the event business, so that the students will obtain an even more varied impression of the many opportunities of the business.

