

SPORT KNOWLEDGE AUSTRALIA AND THE 'LEADING-EDGE' APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR THE SPORT INDUSTRY

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Context

In 2004 the Australian Federal Government called for bids for the award of a grant of A\$8.7m (5.48m Euros) funding over the period of three years for establishing an international centre of excellence for sport science and management. The government believed there was an opportunity for Australia to earn export dollars through education, based on the country's reputation for expertise in sport.

Project Partners

A successful bid was lodged by the consortium of Sydney Olympic Park Authority, the University of Technology, Sydney, and the University of Sydney (Bid Application, 2003). The organization commenced in July 2004, when the shareholders entered a formal agreement and established an interim management committee comprised of representatives of the three partners (Shareholders Agreement, 2004). In due course they appointed a CEO, who commenced duties in January 2005, and two university liaison officers to retain formal connections with each institution in addition to Board representation.

Results

Sport Knowledge Australia (SKA) is the Australian Government's International Centre of Excellence for Sports Science and Management. Our mission includes: to provide leading-edge sport education products both domestically and internationally. Our value proposition is the delivery of sport education products to the sport industry that are:

MARKET DRIVEN - Courses are structured and delivered to suit the knowledge, location and time demands of students according to market research

CUTTING EDGE - We deliver the benefits to our students of a knowledge system that captures the latest in sport industry and academic knowledge from Australia and abroad

PRACTICAL - We marry the latest lessons of the sport industry with the theories and principles from academia to deliver practical education, and of

HIGH QUALITY - Our academics represent the best available from the Australian sports science and management tertiary education sector.

Our unique strength lies in our identification of the latest sport industry knowledge through a well-resourced and sophisticated knowledge system (Generic Information Brochure, 2005).

Discussion

Using a market-driven approach, our products fill professional development niches domestically as well as satisfying international client needs. SKA aims to harness, package and deliver Australian expertise through education programmes of the highest standard across the globe and where appropriate in partnership with like-minded overseas institutions.

Our **BUSINESS MODEL** is built on identifying, obtaining and teaching, through the best available academic/industry talent and the latest sport industry knowledge (www.sportedu.org).

Our first two products, 'Executive Sport Management Programme' and 'Elite Sport Coaching Symposium' are designed for experienced sport managers and coaches holding a senior position at the State or national level. They are presented by academics using a case study methodology involving leading industry figures. Students will be involved in a face-to-face, intensive, live-in learning experience. The courses are non-award (Course Brochure, 2005).

Future courses include: Planning for and delivering a Major Sport Event (in collaboration with MI Associates); High Performance Management; and Advanced Sport Marketing. Further collaborations are sought to combine Australian expertise with that of other countries.

The paper will explore this model for professional education and suggest it as the future direction for this sector of the market.

References

- Sydney Olympic Park Authority (2003) *Bid Application for International Centre of Excellence in Sport Science and Administration* Sydney: University of Technology
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