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Operations

Visions Editors

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Operations

OPERATIONS

QUESTION 1: What role does risk play in personal decisions in the industry?

ANSWER: The personal risks are high. It takes someone with much guts and fortitude to be successful in the industry because of the high personal risk involved. The personal risk, in this sense, is desire for a more flexible versus structured lifestyle.

QUESTION 2: What are the opportunities for entrepreneurship?

ANSWER: The base assumption that it takes a large capital investment to get involved is a misnomer. The amount of capital outlay in terms of base equipment is small, especially entering the profession as a concessionaire. What is very important is the ability to be creative in the development of selling an old product in a new way or having a new product that can be competitive with old products. If one is willing to apply the necessary patience and time and give up many of the social amenities for a flexible lifestyle, it is possible to make a very good living in the industry as an independent operator. The key ingredients are patience and time.

QUESTION 3: What is the most lucrative type of operation?

ANSWER: The most lucrative operations are food and games. Food has a natural appeal and the sales approach is quite different than in games. Food depends more upon a product type sales approach and games more upon the technique of sales.

QUESTION 4: The IAAPA has been successful in bringing buyers and sellers together in a format that is educational. What has been the essential ingredient that has brought this about?

ANSWER: The operating policy of the philosophy of the organization has been open door. The suppliers have been on an equal footing with the owners and operators and they have not been treated as second-class citizens. The open, free exchange of ideas among suppliers and owners and operators is the primary focus of the sharing. The suppliers, many

times, are the primary presenters at the workshops. The service phases of the business are treated as family members. It is this family atmosphere that brings about the free exchange of ideas. Most people do not realize the importance of the service industry. There are five to six suppliers to each person in operations and ownership.

QUESTION 5: What has been the impact of good relations between suppliers and owners and operators?

ANSWER: The primary impact has been upon an increase in the intelligence of the membership. Because of the good relationships that exist, the service industry has been willing to contribute positively to the development of the industry. The result has been that overall idea pools or intelligence capability of the operation has increased dramatically. This has also been true of the entrance of the female into the workforce. I feel that because females are now entering the workforce, the human resource capital can be better utilized and, as a result, we are in the middle of a new industrial revolution based upon a greater resource ability. It is also the interaction between operators and owners and the service industry and one being the sounding board of the other keeps perspectives in balance. One feeds to the other so that there is a constant information flow.

QUESTION 6: What has been the impact of the suppliers upon the economy of a particular park?

ANSWER: I do not know that the suppliers have had any particular impact. Many times the primary dollar flow that is generated by the theme park is the calculated value of the park and the community. Another calculation that needs to be completed is based upon the service industry, that is, the supplier to that park, because these have roll-over dollars that also directly impact upon the community, maybe even more so than the park itself.

QUESTION 7: In terms of buyer-seller relationships, what has been one of the more successful sales approaches that has been used by suppliers?

ANSWER: Owners and operators are looking for three basic elements when they go on a trade show floor. One is the longevity of the product or service. Another is the maintenance records. And the third is the basic appeal that the product of service will have to the customer. Successful suppliers are those who have developed products and services that meet these three requirements.

QUESTION 8: What has been the supplier's influence upon the profession?

ANSWER: The suppliers have been the innovators in the industry and have provided the necessary research and development to constantly bring out new products for the industry's consideration. There is a constant pressure within the industry for new products and services so as to maintain a competitive edge in park operations. Therefore, the research and development in the amusement parks and attractions industry has been very aggressive. This aggressiveness has led to progressive development and growth and the consideration of new products on a limited basis annually. I believe that this is one of the reasons why we had very

good conference participation. Owners and operators are all looking for something new to attract consumers. The customers or clients, in terms of the amusement parks and attractions industry, is very sophisticated. They may be the ones applying the most pressure for the development of something new, which in turn, has put pressure upon the owners and operators to develop a market for the research and development function by the suppliers. This drive for newness is what has brought change within the profession.

QUESTION 9: Why has the intensity level, in terms of research and development in the amusement parks and attractions industry, been greater than other personal service industries?

ANSWER: The intensity has been greater because of a different type of psychology by the consumer. It is an extension of the flash and flare that represents this different psychology associated with amusement parks and attractions. There is very little empirical research that has been done on the psychology of amusement parks and attractions. This drive for newness, in terms of the psychology, is what distinguishes the amusement parks and attractions from other personal service industries.

QUESTION 10: What is one of the primary elements that brought change in the industry?

ANSWER: The suppliers through their research and development. There is a competition each year to add new products and this pressure on the industry puts pressure on the suppliers for new ideas and has established the pattern for research and development.

QUESTION 11: What is one of the primary elements that has brought about this pressure?

ANSWER: The public's demand for change is the primary element. Another is that the taste of these consumers is always changing, based upon trends within the society. One of the important factors is that the amusement parks and attractions industry is more sensitive to change than other industries. The same pressures that have been on the industry in the past and present will be there in new products and services and the forms that they take.

QUESTION 12: What are the basic processes you use to develop a park?

ANSWER: You find a location, take a map and put a two hour driving time circle on it and figure about 25% of the visits will come from this area. Make a two to four hour circle and 8-10% of your business will come from this area. Make a four hour plus circle and 2-3% of your business will fall in that area. Take the percentages and the population base in each of the areas identified and you will have an estimate of the number of individuals who will visit your park at least once. When you get the total, you will know the total size that your park must accommodate and you can build and plan your park accordingly. The season is about 110-120 days in most areas, and you can then figure out your daily attendance. You will need to know the patterns of the participation by hour and by day of the week and by month of the year. What I am suggesting is that you need to know the pattern of your traffic flow and the distribution of the visits in your season. You can

then figure the number of hot dogs, hamburgers, etc., you must have on hand at any given time. The general concept is that you operate the park on size based upon the peak period and the number of individuals who will be visiting during the peak periods. Once you know the number of individuals who will be visiting during the peak period or anticipated peak period, then you can figure the square footage of your park on a more accurate basis. An example of how you might figure or do a calculation is that you estimate that your peak period is at 3:00 p.m., there will be approximately 2,000 people on the grounds and you know that there are approximately 4.1 visitors per car. Your average size parking lot will need accommodate about 500 cars.

QUESTION 13: What are the relationships between amusement parks and attractions and fairs?

ANSWER: The amusement parks and attractions complement the fair business. It represents an effort at greater diversity to appeal to all types of the population.

QUESTION 14: What are some of the factors from a business perspective that have brought about this diversification?

ANSWER: Competition is the primary element that has fueled development of facilities and programs for these different audiences. It is good business to run an effective and efficient operation. In other words, the success of the amusement parks and attractions industry is giving the public what it wants. The industry has a history of providing these additional attractions and services upon a demand basis.

QUESTION 15: What are some of the techniques that have been used by the industry to try to develop an adequate approach to needs assessment?

ANSWER: One has been through the organization-the conducting of workshops in terms of an idea sharing period. The organization has sought out progressive owners that have tried new ideas, been successful with them and tried to bring them to the national conferences to share with others. An example of this was about six years ago, we had someone making a presentation on waterslides and even more recently, about three years ago, someone making a presentation on the soft-play areas. These topics were both well explored at the national conference and it was an excellent opportunity for owners and operators to hear about new ideas that had a potential application to their operation. A second component is the trying out of new products on an audience in a laboratory setting. The Texas State Fair, in September, is where many food and merchandising people in the industry try out new products for the following season. This is a laboratory in which they can see how a sample population will react to new products, materials and techniques. The Oktoberfest, held in Germany, is a similar event for those in the European markets. A third way is that suppliers will visit clients during the winter months to show their new products. The suppliers, in this instance, give the owners and operators new ideas and usually use some kind of market data to sell their products, based upon consumer demands. Individuals in the amusement parks and attractions industry have an ability or an insight to anticipate trends because of their experience of working with people. They also have the ability to take an idea and adapt it to their own situation in order to improve upon the

basic product through some type of programming. An example that I have cited earlier is the gentleman who was a restaurateur and was not doing a very good business but decided to open for the lunch hour and focus his complete restaurant operation around soap operas. What I am pinpointing is the innovative ability of the owners and operators as the primary dimension that has kept our industry viable through the years.

QUESTION 16: Could you please comment on the need to generate new rides and programs each year through capital investments?

ANSWER: In the past, the major trend has been that amusement parks and attractions have added something new each year or on a regular basis to attract repeat visits and to stimulate interest in their park. The new business or regeneration of old business would be enough to pay for the capital outlay of the previous year. What has happened in the recent past is that the return on these types of new rides and facilities has not been as great as in the past. The reason is that parks and attractions are better programming their facility to balance their park in terms of entertainment, soft-play areas, etc. The primary premise that a park is really never finished is still a valid premise but the need for additional capital investment is being looked at in a very different light because in the present economy it cannot sustain the numbers at the gate. Because the industry is non-competitive, that is, each park or attraction has its own locality or its own personality attraction to a segment of the population, the competition for new ideas becomes one of sharing program ideas, even to the point of trading rides. The pressure is not one of competition but one of collaboration within the industry to find new ideas. The industry may be moving away from the concept of rides and new technology each year to providing more of a balanced experience. The reason for this movement is to provide better park design and programming for the client/customer.

QUESTION 17: What is the impact if an operation does not have something new each year?

ANSWER: Nothing really disastrous happens at one time but they begin to lose business slowly, and even more importantly, they begin to lose their competitive edge, that is, a desire to serve the client. A trend that has alleviated this need for new rides, programs, facilities, etc., has been group business. This has helped because you do not have to have something new consistently to attract group business. What is more important is amenity services for the group. Group business has been a factor, especially with industry, and will continue to become a larger share of the business in the future.

QUESTION 18: Are there many business failures within the amusement parks and attractions industry?

ANSWER: There are not. In fact, I cannot think of one business failure in the past ten years. What is more appropriate is reasons for parks that go out of business. There are two primary reasons that have caused many parks to go out of business. One is the land values have increased significantly, and two is that the children of the family who owns the operation are no longer interested in the business.

QUESTION 19: One of the reasons for business failure has been bad

management. Has this been a problem in the amusement parks and attractions industry?

ANSWER: Bad management has not been a problem. In fact, it is an industry with a very good track record of management and I think the primary reason for this is that the industry has an incentive for change and they are constantly looking for new processes of management, as well as new products for their park.

QUESTION 20: Given the fact that business failures and management are reasonable, what are some of the prime reasons that cause significant shifts in attendance?

ANSWER: One of the primary factors over the years that has caused attendance shifts has been the weather. It is an outdoor industry and is at the mercy of the elements. Excessive rain or heat can be devastating to the attendance numbers.

QUESTION 21: What are the most effective forms of promotion for most amusement parks and attractions?

ANSWER: 1) Television is the most important because it reaches the greatest number of people, 2) group business and advertisements directly related to group sales and, 3) radio during the prime time, that is, 7:30-8:30 A.M. when most of the individuals have their radio on while traveling to work. It must be remembered that promotion and advertising is a very essential part of the business but it is even more important to have a sound operation because word of mouth is one of the most effective means of advertisement.

QUESTION 22: Could you please give us an indication about some of the elements that are important in a successful operation?

ANSWER: A successful operation is one that strives for quality services. Quality is the overriding emphasis of most successful operations. Quality is defined as an amusement park and attraction that has service minded employees, has something new each season, is clean, truthful in advertising, etc.

QUESTION 23: What do you mean by the statement that a park is never finished?

ANSWER: A park is really never completed and always has to add something new each season. In the past, it has meant adding new thrill attractions. The future development has been the adding of new forms of entertainment, food services, games, etc. It does not always have to be a major capital investment, just something new in relation to the experience for the customer so that he or she will return.

QUESTION 24: What are direct products of a successful operation and what are the primary factors?

ANSWER: The reputation of the facility is the most important. All the elements that relate to quality establish a personality for the park. It is this reputation that is most important in attracting new business, as well as maintaining repeat business.

QUESTION 25: Could you characterize some of the different types of amusement parks and attractions?

ANSWER: First, it must be recognized that the amusement parks and attractions industry, as I have stated earlier, is a non-competitive business and that a park usually has its own local market or its own special niche in the marketplace. Amusement parks and attractions serve a particular region or particular clientele. The reason the industry has been so successful is that it is made up of many operators and owners who have a good attitude and are willing to change in relation to their customers and clients. The primary element that has made most owners and operators manage a successful operation is that they are willing to listen to their clients and take the time to attend educational workshops and then have the special ability to apply this information to their setting. They listen to their suppliers in regard to development of particular products or rides. They also conduct extensive surveys to find out the base needs of the people who are attending their park. What I am suggesting is that an amusement park or attraction takes on the appearance of the people who attend. The spectrum of types of activities that take place at a park are from the thrill ride to the entertainment. Most parks have thrill rides and entertainment but the mix determines to what extent they want to emphasize a particular phase of the business and that determines the park's basic personality.

Question 26: Could you give an example of a successful operation and tell us why it is successful?

ANSWER: One of the operations that is most successful is Cedar Point of Ohio. Some of the reasons why I think it has been successful is that it hires employees who are service oriented, it is a clean park, the population that it attracts is quite diverse, it is very nicely landscaped, it has a full line of food services that appeal to all ages, that is, fast food to sit down dining, a full line of rides that appeal to all ages, etc. It is very accessible by boat, car, or bus and is located between three major metropolitan areas. It is a facility that is very accommodating and has a diversity of products and services that is balanced for the family entertainment dollar.

QUESTION 27: It is good that you have used this example as it is one of the success stories in terms of changing from a traditional amusement park to a theme park. Could you give the history behind this development?

ANSWER: The present ownership had purchased the land at Cedar Point to turn it into a real estate/condominium development. They had made the purchase and still had contracts with several suppliers so they were committed legally to operate the park for one year. After the one year of operation, they were so successful that they decided they would try it one more year. After a number of years, they decided to go into the business full time. They stabilized the value and profitability in this type of business.

QUESTION 28: Why were these individuals successful?

ANSWER: They were successful because: 1) they were good managers and had a good understanding of business processes and 2) they hired top quality people who knew the peculiarities of the amusement parks and attractions business and the managers listened to the advice of these people.

QUESTION 29: What I hear you saying is something that we emphasize in this journal, that is, it takes the application of good business processes and even more importantly, an understanding of which business processes apply to the leisure industry and why. Could you give an example of one of the business processes that apply particularly to the amusement parks and attractions industry that is usually not a characteristic of other industries?

ANSWER: One of the critical factors to the operation of amusement parks and attractions is the personnel. One of the factors that makes it different is that it is seasonal, and even more important, the individuals who work in this industry must be very service-oriented. They must also be selected to directly interface with the consumer who is in a leisure state of mind. Proper recruitment, selection and training of employees is critical to help them understand individuals in a leisure setting. There is a great need for diversity of employment types within the industry, more so than in other types of industries. For example, someone who is a ride operator must be very systematic. A game operator must be highly extraverted and someone who is in food operation must have an obsession to be neat and clean. There is such a varied need for personality types. When I was Executive Director of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, we tried to develop a psychological test to help owners and operators to screen employees. What happened was that we found that those people who already had a tremendous amount of experience with a park could screen people very effectively. In fact, most personnel people can tell within seconds whether they want the individual, the type of position that they could fill and if they have supervisory capabilities or not. It is an intuitive process used in personnel selection, based upon experience.

QUESTION 30: What is usually the nature of employment of theme parks and attractions?

ANSWER: Approximately 85% of the individuals are college students and under the age of 21 and 15% are over the age of 21 and, in fact, those over 21 are mostly retired individuals. Recruitment and selection are very important but placement is even more important to the operation because it is the essential ingredient to mixing and matching the job and the person's temperments for successful operation. It is also very important that the individual be trained in understanding the nature of the clients and audience that he/she will be serving in the leisure setting. This has to all be done in a short period of time because the sometimes it is very difficult to hold seasonal staff due to the temporary nature of the work. Personnel is the primary element that directly interfaces with the public and, as a result, they represent the park's image and its successful operation.

QUESTION 31: Does the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions have any materials to help owners and operators?

ANSWER: They have orientation and training sessions, employment manuals, films, etc. that have been designed to help in the selection, recruitment, placement, and training of professionals.

QUESTION 32: What is the ratio between permanent and temporary staff in park operation?

ANSWER: It is a 1:15 ratio so that if a park employs 10 full time people, they will employ 150 during their seasonal operation.

QUESTION 33: Could you please give me a summary of the managers job?

ANSWER: It is the manager's job to mix and match resources/people to have an effective facility that will directly relate to customer satisfaction. It is the mixing and matching of these resources and people that are the critical element to management.

QUESTION 34: What are the keys to return business?

ANSWER: It is the quality of the experience and understanding the psychology of the theme park. Most parks are not designed nor programmed as effectively as they could be on a psychological basis. Many times people who complain about standing in lines for license tags, will stand in line an hour or two for a 30 second ride. Often individuals who are spend thrifths will spend money freely when inside an amusement park or attraction. The difference in these individuals is that they are in a different psychological set or mental set caused by the leisure condition. The great need is to better understand this condition on a scientific basis so that the park can be designed and programmed better as a spontaneous recreational area.

QUESTION 35: Is there a management philosophy based upon psychological factors and how important is it to the industry?

ANSWER: Most management philosophies are reflective of the management from top down. The non-competitiveness of the industry has given rise to openness of individuals to each other. This has resulted in not only a sharing but a people-oriented industry. The two elements that characterize most management are warm and caring. These characteristics give rise to an almost carefree atmosphere. An example of implementation of this in a park is when lines are too long, usually managers try to program by providing some type of entertainment to reduce the psychological time associated with the wait. The leisure experience created is often based upon an attitude that is associated with a certain fondness or caring by the people themselves. One of the common types of experiences is associated with memories when people create their earlier experiences with amusement parks and attractions. What essentially is happening in an amusement park or attraction is that dollars are being traded for a leisure experience. When individuals are in a leisure state of mind, they are in a different mood and very susceptible to change. There are many types of immediate as well as long term impacts and outcomes. There is very little empirical work that has been completed on types of impacts or outcome.

QUESTION 36: What has been the response of the amusement parks and attractions industry to serve the handicapped or special populations?

ANSWER: There is a growing awareness of this clientele and the need to serve this population. It is very difficult for owners and managers to know how to directly deal with this type of audience, especially given their particular handicap and the type of protection needed. The primary focus is on reasonableness without restricting their use of the park and being able to make all attractions within the park directly accessible. It is very difficult and this is one of the areas that is going to have to be worked on extensively in the future.

QUESTION 37: What are some of the major marketing principles in how amusement parks and attractions are managed?

ANSWER: There are two important factors to consider. One is the client and the environment and then stratifying the population based upon these factors to determine specific needs and wants. Demographics such as age, income, industry type and educational level are most important. The type of environment is whether the individual comes from a suburban, city, tourist, or industrial area. Once the customer or clientele has been characterized, then it is necessary to ascertain why they attended amusement parks or attractions or why they enjoy visiting parks. Then a message can be designed for a particular media to carry the basic selling points of the park in relation to a particular population or stratification. Advertisements/promotions/marketing is a year round effort. The park must be constantly kept in the eye of the community especially based on the amusement parks and attractions, and managements efforts through community involvement.

QUESTION 38: What are the important factors related to the development of a good feasibility study?

ANSWER: There are five important factors: 1) time-when do the particular clients have the time to attend the amusement parks or attractions. This is usually when the weather is good, the kids are out of school, etc. 2) Income-how much the particular audience has as part of their disposable income to spend on entertainment. 3) Mobility-transportation to the park. It must be accessible by bus, automobile, air, and when visitors arrive, there must be adequate parking. Getting around inside the park is also of major concern. Traffic flow patterns are another extremely important element to success of a parks operation. 4) People-the population available within a particular stratification, especially within a 250 mile radius around the park. 5) Flash and flare-the attractiveness of the park. A park must have a certain reputation and that reputation must extend out to attract individuals into the park.

QUESTION 39: What are some of the major organizational dimensions that exist within a park?

ANSWER: Most parks are departmentalized and their structure really depends upon their administrator or management system. Within most parks, some of the common functions are: 1) management which usually includes the personnel, accounting, and finance departments, 2) operations which usually includes games, arcades, food, rides, and merchandising, 3) management and housekeeping are usually tied directly to the various operations, 4) personal services, that is, safety,

security, etc., and 5) sales/marketing, promotion and advertisement.

QUESTION 40: Given the fact that revenue is the bottom line in most amusement parks and attractions operations, where are the revenues generated?

ANSWER: Revenue generation can be divided into direct and indirect systems. I am not going to make a distinction between direct and indirect systems but just try to characterize the revenue generation potential of a park. First, one must understand that two of the common practices are that all parks have basic revenue centers and they are based upon the pay one price concept. Most of the revenue is generated from what I would term admittance revenues which include the gate price and parking. Food services and games provide the next largest revenue source, and arcades and merchandising usually provide a third largest source of revenue for the park. Various operations utilize these revenue sources differently to sustain their profit line. There are usually other revenue sources, especially at the larger parks such as locker rental. These are usually minor in comparison to the other revenue sources. The one factor about revenue generation in the industry is that most people feel once they have entered a park they have not been cheated. The amusement parks and attractions industry is one of the most reasonably priced family entertainment activities. One can spend as much time at a park as necessary to feel that he/she has gotten his/her money's worth. This is not true of other forms of entertainment such as movies. I think one of the successes of the industry has been the "pay one price" concept because it has kept the industry very viable and priced within the family budget. Once the individual is inside, and if the price has not been exorbitant, he/she has extra money to spend on food, games, etc. If the park is programmed correctly, the additional dollars can be extracted on an indirect basis and the individual is free to spend money. The base success of money in regard to the park is the freedom of decisions and the expenditure of money based upon an individual's decision.

QUESTION 41: What is the attractiveness of amusement parks and attractions to the general population?

ANSWER: Each park has a characteristic or personality of its own and should have its own specialty. The key is development of a reputation for some particular aspect of their park. For example, the amusement park and attraction in Huntington, West Virginia is known for its food. Many of the members of the community come to the park to dine out in its formal restaurant. There are other parks that are known for their roller coasters and people will come from all over the country to ride a particular coaster. In fact, there are two organizations that have been formed based upon their interests in riding roller coasters. What I am really suggesting is that because of a quality aspect of the park, it gains a reputation. There is also psychological factors working because hot dogs often taste better at a park than they do at home. The primary philosophy is to gain extra dollars from the visitor through indirect methods and allow them the choice of how they spend their money on food, games, merchandising, etc., and give them something tangible for their dollars.

QUESTION 42: What is the basis of a psychological experience at an

amusement park or attraction?

ANSWER: The basis of a psychological experience is primarily emotional and sensory. Parks have been designed to stimulate the five senses. A visit to an amusement park is a very sensory experience and each of the senses are stimulated in a variety of ways. Many of the experiences are passive. An unusual feature of the amusement park is it involves active participation. What other form of leisure or recreation can say that they stimulate all the senses in one experience? The emotional aspect is development of a carefree attitude or fantasy. This allows you to explore through the area of fantasy and a world of make believe the emotions that would not be possible in another setting. Another important element of a park in this relationship is that the individual has a responsibility and an opportunity to answer how they want to be amused. In many cases the choices are made for the individual but in a park the individual has an active choice in how he or she wants to be amused. The primary function of a park is to expand the sensory experience. These experiences are not expanded for the sense of being the individual pleasure seekers but providing a lasting value in regard to long term benefits.

QUESTION 43: Could you make a summary statement about systems operations of a direct nature.

ANSWER: It is the function of systems operation to bring together, in a coordinated effort through a spontaneous area, a psychological condition that will allow individuals to explore a sensory and emotional experience in an active mood to be amused for immediate satisfaction and long term objectives. It is important to provide this experience at a price that is equated with the worth of the experience. The primary emphasis is on quality. This has been achieved within the industry because of a better pricing structure than other leisure systems and a non-competitive structure that allows people to share to give somebody something new each year which gives the industry a competitive edge.

QUESTION 44: Why are indirect systems, that is, the parts of operation that cannot be seen, not well understood especially in terms of their contribution to a participant's experience?

ANSWER: The indirect factors are just as important because they directly interface with the customer and the products of their work, that is, cleanliness, proper supplies, etc., are extremely important to providing the services needed. There are two types of indirect services, one is during the day and the other is during the evening. The night operations are most important because this is when much of the trash is removed, rides are lubricated, the supplies are replenished, and inventories are taken so that supplies can be reordered. This part of the operation must be very organized and be kept on a very strict schedule. Routine must be established so as to develop consistency. It is also important to understand all of the technical aspects of the operation and have someone who understands the technical aspects to set the schedules and develop the routine. For example, the type of equipment that you have will directly depend upon how often it needs to be lubricated. It is important to know how often it needs to be lubricated so that it can be operating at peak efficiency. Another example is that a roller coaster must be walked every day to inspect

parts and you have to have someone who knows the technical aspects of the ride so that he/she will be able to spot any problems. One of the most amazing places to visit is Walt Disney operations. If you ever see the behind the scenes operation you will realize the complexity of the operation. Most individuals never think about these indirect services but they directly impact upon the customer. Another important dimension that has occurred during the past few years is the adoption of the computer for indirect systems operations. This helps with the inventory, accounting, keeps a record of maintenance schedules, etc.

QUESTION 45: How do the services during the day differ from those in the evening?

ANSWER: Indirect services that are provided during the day must be less conspicuous so that they do not disturb the visitor's sense of continuity. Parks are usually so designed that the delivery areas and preparation areas are well away from the visitor. Most of these supplies and services are developed out of this central back door. Other indirect service such as security and parking are a very important part of the visible operation that an individual expects to see to develop confidence in the operation. Indirect services are essential to a smooth operation.

QUESTION 46: What are the benefits to a community of having an amusement park and attraction in their area?

ANSWER: The economic impacts are quite extensive because the park has an employment staff that is extensive and these individuals spend money in the community, pay taxes, and bring in people from outside the area who generate business. The park buys supplies directly from local businesses and all of this money multiplies itself through the community to stimulate its economic base. In addition the amusement park and attraction is a very caring social industry. It is a form of wholesome entertainment for the family. Park owners and operators are social, humanitarian individuals who often donate their facilities for charitable purposes.

QUESTION 47: One of the important aspects of a park is obviously its design not only in its systems operation and indirect services, but also its design for customer convenience, etc. Could you give the three or four design principles at parks that have focused upon customer use of a spontaneous recreational area?

ANSWER: We live in a right handed culture so most of the starting points for circulation of traffic, visual stimulation, etc., have been placed based upon the right handed principle. Another is that it is located in a circle and a variety of rides, food services, and restrooms, are provided on a decentralized basis within the circle so that the consumer can get services of any kind at any place in the park and that there is even distribution of individuals within sections. The third important aspect of design is the flare and flash so that it is very aesthetically appealing and will indeed attract the customer. These are the three design principles that most amusement park operations consider first when they have the opportunity to build the park.

QUESTION 48: Could you please characterize the primary target audiences.

ANSWER: The four primary target audiences are families, couples, singles and group business. Of these population segments, the organization or group business has steadily grown over the past 15 years and will continue to grow. Certain operations depend solely on group business. This type of business is becoming more important because it represents less risk and a certain income potential is assured. This type of business is also less restrictive in its demands because the focus is away from new technology toward services. Third is that once a relationship with a group is established it can be counted on as repeat business. A fourth reason is that there are less advertisement expenses.

QUESTION 49: Who establishes operating policy for the park?

ANSWER: Most operation policies are directly established by the customers. The operating policy must be directly tied to the desires and wants of the consumers. An operating policy not directly consistent with consumer wants and demands is doomed to failure. Examples of this would be time of day for opening, types of parking facilities, nature and type of food services, etc.

QUESTION 50: Of the five elements of a feasibility study, LIMPH, which is the most important?

ANSWER: The element that deals with the flash and flare is most important. Even if the other four elements are present, a park has to have a basic attractiveness as part of its characteristics.

QUESTION 51: In determining the three market districts of your feasibility study what are the mileages?

ANSWER: The three marketing zones are fifty miles, fifty-one miles to one hundred miles and one hundred miles plus. These are the three regions most of the business directly depends upon. Most of the use of a park is day use. There are really two types of operations, those that are more local or regional and the other are those that are more tied to tourists areas such as Disney and Busch Gardens. There are two basic considerations that make them different. One is that many operations relate to tourist areas, especially in Florida, and are open year round. This is a problem because it is during the off-season that many of the rides are maintained and the park is fully serviced. In year round operations, maintaining and servicing an area is more difficult. The only way to do it may be to close certain areas for periods of time and rotate the service or maintenance of these areas during low attendance seasons. Another basic difference is in the service provided. They represent more of a national perspective than a regional approach to design, rides, theme, etc. The techniques that are used by both parks are the same, just the emphasis is different and one represents a more generalized approach.

QUESTION 52: What makes one operation more successful than another?

ANSWER: It is reputation and that different parks again have different

types of reputations, some entertainment, some games, some rides, etc.

QUESTION 53: How do the parks establish these reputations?

ANSWER: Usually a park, either by trial and error or some other happenstance, has offered a quality service and has provided some type of unique experience for the individual and its reputation has grown by word of mouth. It is different from other parks in the way that the experience is presented. Through the years, once a park establishes a reputation, it develops a history and becomes known for that one particular aspect and develops a national reputation for a particular theme or aspect.

QUESTION 54: What is the future growth potential of the business?

ANSWER: At present, its growth potential is expanding more at a steady rate than during the 60's and 70's when the rate of growth was exponential. There will always be a demand for clean, wholesome recreation for all ages and sexes. The expansion and growth that will occur is in the specializing of more parks for particular population segments, especially the older generation in the next twenty to thirty years. The forms that amusement parks and attractions will take in the future is very hard to determine. It depends directly upon the imagination of the future leaders and ways of interesting people in spending their leisure time. There is, in this industry, also an ever increasing appetite for new technology and this new technology will bring a very different approach to the amusement parks and attractions business. I do not feel that the tradition and roots of the movement will be lost but only different aspects will be emphasized. I feel that there will be an increased interest in education. I see future developments being something like the Epcot complex. The factors that will bring this about, as I have pointed out earlier, is a return to the more traditional family values and conservatism.

QUESTION 55: What are the most important factors to a successful operation?

ANSWER: The most important factor, I think, is having continuity between the direct and indirect services that presents one type of image related to quality services and operation that reflect the characteristics of management, from the top down, who directly understand the needs, wants and desires of the client being served.