**CASE STUDY - Education**

If M.J. Lorca could travel back in time a dozen years, she would kick her 19-year-old self’s ass. That’s when she started waffling through 10 years of postsecondary—a liberal-arts exploration that cost her more than $40,000 in student loans, plus interest. Now 31, without a degree, marketable skill–deficient, and hiding from creditors, she thinks she has found her spark: nursing. She starts at Douglas College in February.

“I was so self-centred as a teen, I couldn’t see more than six months ahead,” Lorca admitted, noting that the mandatory visits to her high-school guidance counsellor were useless. She didn’t visit her college or university advising centre, based on that experience. She blames only herself for her predicament.

Lorca is an extreme case, a bit of a waffling-student parable, really. But waffling, or “exploring”, is the way most students journey through school, if statistics and anecdotes tell the truth

About half of post-secondary students drop out or change programs by the end of their first year, Statistics Canada reported in 1997. Up to four out of five students don’t know what they want to do with their education when they start it, says the government’s summary report for its 2003 BC College and Institute Short Stay Pilot Survey.

Just 75 percent of students completed the college or institute credential they set out to earn, according to another report, the 2003 B.C. Student Outcomes survey. Furthermore, just 44 percent of former students reported that their job is “very related” to the training they took.

Lorca, who decided multiple times that her programs were not right for her, discovered her passion for nursing at the North Shore Compass Centre, a nonprofit career-counselling centre funded by Human Resources Development Canada. The 33-hour Implicit Career Search course offers unemployed Vancouverites the chance to reflect, individually and as part of a group, on the question “What do I want to offer the world?”

“Every book I’ve read about career says, ‘Know yourself and your purpose,’ then they don’t give you the tools to do that,” the centre’s program coordinator, Sharon Clarke, told the Straight. Her clients often arrive only knowing that they’ve wasted 20 years working at a job they hate, and they’ve hit a wall. They’ve arrived at their average age of 42 without self-knowledge and without ever having taken the time to think deeply about what they want to offer the world. Clarke’s dream is to offer her program to students transitioning from high school to university, before they get trapped in debt. Now the course is available to anyone—so long as they’re unemployed. “Anyone who would like to get more focused about what they’re doing should take the Implicit Career Search,” Clarke said. “It can save you a lot of time and a lot of money.”

With tuition at a premium in 2005, it could be 33 hours well spent.

Excerpted from an article in ‘Georgia Straight’ magazine August 2005

**MAX RESTAURANTS**

Max operates in a highly competitive world. In the fast food business (as in many business) you have to keep costs low and keep people highly productive. Max also has a tough goal, ‘*To be the best fast food restaurant in The World’.* To achieve that we not only need to make and save money, we need to have the best staff and managers in the world. And we have that…

When we started using the ICS workshops within our high potentials program (Team 20) there were only about 50% of the trainees that became restaurant managers. And only about 20% that stayed on as managers. The rest went back to their local town and back to their old job as assisting managers. Max wants to expand not only in Sweden but also in the rest of the world. But to do that we have to have many good managers. That’s when we got in touch with the ICS program.

We liked the program from the start because it promoted courage and self-awareness. That’s exactly what these young men and women needed. By answering the two questions of Mission statement and your Work purpose, people made their decision and then stuck with it. They made a clear plan of what they wanted to be In the future.

Today 85% of all Team 20 members become a restaurant manager and almost 70% stay at their first assignment. Because of the ICS workshop we’ve cut training time in half. It took us about 2 years to train an RM before and today its one-year.

But the most important change is the drive and ambition that people attending the program are showing us. In only a few days come to realize that “I am the one and only person responsible for my own development”. And that makes a world of difference. They have made a decision and they are going for it.

Not everyone will become successful, not everyone will be a manager. But for once in their life they will try. And they will do it with 100% devotion at least for a while, long enough to see if this is what they are supposed to do. And if they don’t become managers? In that case they will have saved a lot of time and Max will have saved a lot of money. It’s expensive to hire the wrong manager.

Nowadays we also use the ICS program for all our restaurant managers, district managers and people recruited from other businesses. We want them to be clear why they do what they do. And that’s what ICS brings, clarity of where we are going both as a company and as individuals.

We are on the road to becoming the best fast food restaurant in the world!

Jonas Aspenfjall

General Manager Operations

Max Burgers, Stockholm Sweden

**CASE STUDY**

Kevin is a 56-year old male who participated in the Implicit Career Search workshop as part of his involvement in the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers Program through Okanagan College in Revelstoke. He disclosed early in the workshop that he had spent more of his adult life in prison than out of it. During the ‘Behaviour’ module of the workshop Kevin came to the realization of how many individuals, including friends and family members, he had hurt both physically and emotionally. As part of his Personal Development Plan, John decided to apologize to the individuals he had previously hurt as part of his experience during the two week workshop. The transformation in John as he followed this plan was remarkable. His physical appearance changed as he ‘cleaned up’ each day in preparation for his meetings. His posture improved daily as the load he had been carrying for years got lighter. John’s mental acuity also improved as the workshop progressed and he began to realize that although he regretted many of his previous actions, he had learned a lot about life along the way and he had a lot of life still to live.

At the beginning of the second week of the workshop Kevin developed a work purpose statement based on giving back to the community he had taken from in his past. By the end of the workshop he had developed a well thought out business plan to :

*“Provide services (firewood, lawn care, pruning, gardening, etc.) at reasonable rates to people on fixed income. Some of these services will be free to help build credibility and trust within the community.”*