



مينالأك
MENALAC

مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – NOVEMBER 2022

FUTURE PROOFING YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH TALENT DEVELOPMENT

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

Article by:  WORLDWIDE ZOO CONSULTANTS

There is nothing more satisfying than seeing new staff members develop from 'newbies' through to qualified zookeepers, or operators, and becoming experienced staff, managing their daily work to a high standard, or developing into the supervisors and leaders of the future.

Worldwide Zoo Consultants has been involved in a wide variety of projects that include animal training, zoo/park design and construction supervision. Since 2011, WZC's foundation has been built on operations & management and the one consistent requirement from our clients is to improve and maintain their employee training programmes.

The WZC team has a dedicated international team with professionals who are experienced in many disciplines, ranging from zoo and aquarium directorate and management, zoo admin, record keeping, curatorial, animal keeping, animal training, technical specialists and working with the full range of animal species, terrestrial and aquatic.

Our team also have decades of experience in training staff members at all levels from front line contributors to mid-level expertise up to senior leadership.



مينا لأك
MENALAC

مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – SEPTEMBER 2022

Case Study

A perfect case study is Unity Park Zoo, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This project was for a new zoo to be developed for the Prime Minister of Ethiopia within a large park site in central Addis Ababa. Funding for the endeavour was provided by the UAE. WZC was fully involved in the design, construction supervision and operations of the new zoo, offering a full turnkey solution.



As part of the operational plan the WZC team deployed 12 experienced expat staff from 8 different nationalities. We then hired 65 local staff with no animal experience but with a good level of English language proficiency and education, and who were dedicated to working with animals. The local staff were assessed for competencies, and their level of interest with different animals and work disciplines.

The plan was that all staff would complete a set of introductory training in animal husbandry modules through a combination of formal lectures and traditional classroom teaching, but primarily through hands-on, supervised work.



مينا لأك
MENALAC

مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – SEPTEMBER 2022

The module is an introduction to animal husbandry and includes the basic concepts around animal welfare and the five freedoms - animal behaviours, animal records, animal husbandry, animal training, health & safety and day-to-day management of animals, incorporating international standards and guidelines from AZA, EAZA and WAZA which WZC is a member and subscribes to associated bylaws.



The students (keepers) were assessed formally in the classroom on general information and husbandry principles, with support and guidance from teaching staff. They were then mentored and assessed in the “field” based on a checklist system with ongoing and daily comments on their level of competency and progression through objective feedback.



مينا لأك
MENALAC

مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والجذب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – SEPTEMBER 2022

Following successful completion and instructor certification, the staff were rewarded either through salary increase, bonus or alternative incentives.

There is a second and more advanced module the staff then completed, which develops their skills further and introduces escalated topics including conservation, enrichment, special handling etc.

A third supervisory module is available for those who have interest or show promise as potential leaders.

WZC also offers aquarium training modules and have developed a suite of modules to offer for F&B, visitor management, animal show management and animal record keeping. All modules have learning outcomes, module content, assessment criteria and staff can be reassessed or “refreshed” on any element of the module.

The final step in implementing a successful training programme that stands the test of time is to find those highly skilled and engaged keepers who have achieved high performance levels and time-in-role and certify them as instructors. At this point, over a period of 3-5 years, any zoo or attraction can have a successful and self-sustaining employee training programme administered entirely in-house.

The modules are in the format of an accredited module from a college or university, and in the future WZC intends to work with an accredited organisation or university to get the modules accredited formally and form part of an associated comprehensive training course. Each module is written by a qualified lecturer/teacher to ensure each have significant learning outcomes and achieve the strategic objective of full staff development.

Results

Through systematic training processes, strategic labour planning and hands-on instruction, WZC was able to create from scratch, a well-trained and broad labour force with advanced skillsets to last long into the future.



مينالأك
MENALAC

مجلس الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا للترفيه والحدب السياحي
Middle East and North Africa Leisure & Attractions Council

VENDOR TALK – SEPTEMBER 2022

From onset to completion, our company was on the ground in Ethiopia for a total period of 3 years and upon departure, a team of fully trained local labour force exceeding 75 professionally trained keepers, trainers and hosts remained. This was a significant accomplishment for our organisation, the zoo and the Government of Ethiopia by investing in the people who call this region home. The programme continues to this day and is now self-administered by zoo staff.



Conclusion

Talent and skillset development is a long and time-consuming process which requires investment and expertise. Such investments can be crucial for long-term staffing viability and team member buy-in/satisfaction. We have realised that team members who receive such an important and vital career boost tend to have long standing loyalty and commitment to the organisation, as a result.



Richard Champion

Director of Global Projects
Worldwide Zoo Consultants

Hailing from the UK, Richard is a Zoological professional with over 30 years in the animal management and attractions industry. Richard administered the very first teaching zoo in the UK for Reaseheath College in Cheshire and has work around the world throughout his career.