

# Industry expertise at their fingertips

Advice from chefs and other hospitality industry professionals is just a mouse-click away, using the multimedia tools developed by Newcastle business, Futura Training.

The interactive learning packages each contain a book and CD covering a wide range of industry skills, from basic operational skills to advanced recipes and tips on customer service.

Developed with the support of key industry players, including MLA, and after considerable consultation with educational institutions and other clients, the packages have become the leading hospitality resource in TAFEs and training colleges around Australia.

"Each time a product (in the range) improves, it's based on feedback from students and teachers," said Futura's chief executive Reinhold Forster.

Currently working on four Advanced Diploma titles, Futura already has a Culinary series and a Food & Beverage series covering all segments of the industry, from clubs to high-end restaurants. The packages can be adapted to a wide range of learning styles, making them useful not only for trainees, but also for qualified people who need to brush up on their skills.

Forster, who has an extensive background in both hospitality and education, began developing the packages when he realised there was a need not only for interactive resources, but also for ones with an Australian focus. Previously, many text books being used were from England.

The Futura packages reflect local industry standards and trends, covering cuisines that are popular in Australia such as Asian, Middle Eastern, French and Italian. They address Australian competency standards and have national and industry accreditation.

"We cover all the basics but we also have a lot of contemporary products, from Neil Perry to Luke Mangan and anything in between," Forster said.

"Sometimes the food produced in a TAFE campus was old-fashioned but now the kids can see a modern interpretation."

The packages, most of which sell for \$59.95 for a combined book and CD, cover both front-of-house and back-of-house operations.

The seven packages in the Culinary series cover titles such as *Select, Prepare and Cook Meat, Poultry and Game*, and *Organise and Prepare Food & Methods of Cookery*.

The three packages in the Food & Beverage series include titles such as *Barista Training*, which demonstrates step by step how to make the perfect espresso, and how to care for the equipment.

In other titles, students are offered advice from winemakers, interactive recipes, shopping lists, tips on table-setting, and virtual trips to the fish market and vegetable supplier. The Advanced Diploma packages have interviews with hotel managers who tell what they are looking for.

Forster said the packages depict the reality of the industry, with examples of "what really happens at work and how that impacts on the business". Rather than being just a "dry textbook", the packages put business decisions into context with exercises on how to budget, how to calculate waste percentages, how to cost recipes and so on.

With many businesses failing within the first two years of operation, these interactive exercises, workshops and tests "really drive home the point" and put students in charge of their own learning.

"We've put a lot of elements in the packages to entice the students to extend their learning," Forster said. ☺



WELCOME  
BACK

Michael Bennett has returned to the Hospitality Training Network (HTN) as Chief Operating Officer. Following a six-year stint with the organisation, including time as Marketing & Business Development Manager and Operations Manager, he had spent the past two years as CEO of consultancy and registered training organisation, the WECS Group.

Michael says the chance to return to HTN, the leading group trainer for apprentice chefs and hospitality trainees, was too good to pass up, because he is passionate about the development and training support these young people need.

"We are really looking forward to rolling-out a number of great initiatives throughout 2008, to grow and promote commercial cookery apprenticeships for the industry," he said.